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Inside: See what the candidates for Illinois governor have to say

October 2006 \$3.95

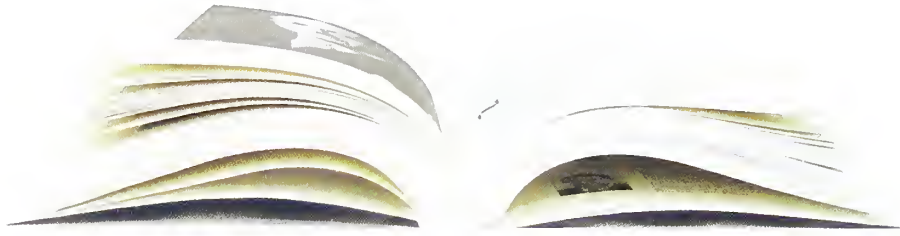
Illinois Issues

A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield

Energy

*Alternative sources are subject
to prevailing political winds*





THE ILLINOIS GOVERNORS

Mostly Good and Competent

The updated edition of this classic book about the Illinois governors concludes that they were a cross section of the political ideas and the social attitudes of their times.

They could be scoundrels:

- One has just been sentenced
- Two served time
- Three beat the rap

But they could be visionary leaders:

- One freed his slaves
- One helped the new state get free of debt
- One changed the face of modern state government

The Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent introduces you to all of the state's chief executives, from Shadrach Bond to Rod Blagojevich. It builds on the work of Robert Howard, the late newspaperman and historian who first wrote about the governors in 1988. Taylor Pensoneau, a biographer of Illinois politicians, and Peggy Boyer Long, executive editor of *Illinois Issues* magazine, have updated the book to include the newest administrations.

Today, perhaps more than ever, we face questions about the abilities and ethics of our elected officials. We have no crystal balls to guide us. Instead, our state offers lessons from a rich and colorful history punctuated by the life stories of the mostly good and competent governors of Illinois.

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Peggy Bayer Long



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showed leadership and political courage**

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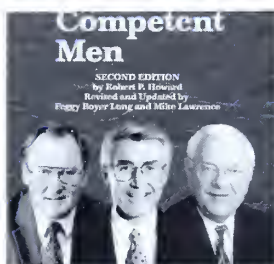
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of State Government Officials

*This popular directory lists the names, addresses
and phone numbers of elected and appointed
officials in all three branches of government.*

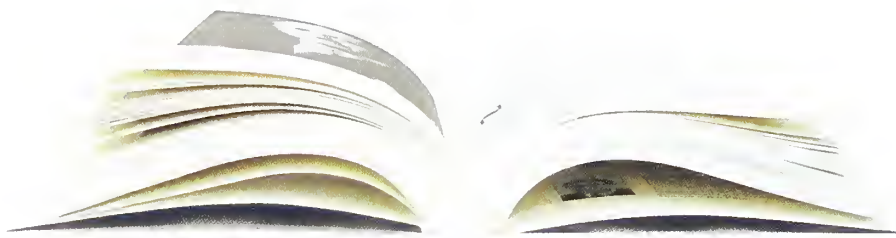
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and *Competent Men* in 1988 and a revised and updated edition in 1999.

Building again on Howard's work, *Illinois Issues* will publish *The Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent* early next year with a new title and additional chapters on George Ryan and Rod Blagojevich by Illinois political



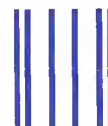
I also would choose the disciplined Thomas Ford, who served as Illinois governor in the 1840s. He found a way to guide the frontier state out of massive debt for infrastructure, including the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the effort to build state-owned railroads — despite opposition from within his party.



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Peggy Boyer Long



Believe it or not, some Illinois governors showed leadership and political courage

by Peggy Boyer Long

A former governor has been sentenced. The current governor is under investigation. And, as we see in this month's issue, a recent poll shows voters aren't inspired by this year's contenders.

When we read today's headlines and watch the late-night campaign ads, it's easy to assume Illinois lives under some kind of political dark star. History shows this assessment to be nearly as old as the state.

Edward Coles, Illinois' second governor, served as chief executive from 1822 to 1826, and he had this to say about the leaders of his adopted home: "[T]he more I see and know of the politicians in this state, the less respect and confidence I have in them."

I ran across that quote a few weeks back while reviewing chapters in the late journalist and historian Robert Howard's biographical book on Illinois governors. *Illinois Issues* published the first edition of *The Illinois Governors: Mostly Good and Competent Men* in 1988 and a revised and updated edition in 1999.

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"[T]he more I see and know of the politicians in this state, the less respect and confidence I have in them."

Edward Coles
Illinois' second governor
from *Mostly Good and Competent Men*
by Robert P. Howard

biographer Taylor Pensoncau. (I'm betting Howard would be happy with that choice.)

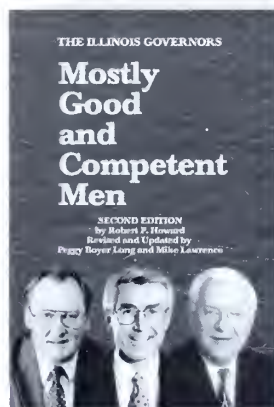
Preparation for this latest book does remind me that Illinois has chosen its share of governors who could be called

scoundrels. Two served time in prison after leaving executive office. Three beat the rap. And there's no telling how many of the 40 men who held the office could be charged by today's standards with, at a minimum, dereliction of duty.

But history offers solace, too. By my lights, we also have chosen some visionary leaders. Among my choices in that category is Coles. When the former Virginian arrived in Illinois, he freed the slaves he had inherited, then went to work to ensure that the new state's constitution wouldn't legalize slavery. To do this, he had to out-maneuver and out-organize the legislature's pro-slavery majority. This was in 1824.

As Howard wrote, Coles "assumed leadership in defining the issue, raised money for publicizing his views, and mobilized public sentiment against supporting the pro-slavery movement. In what had seemed to be a hopeless campaign, the cause of freedom triumphed — 6,640 to 4,972."

I also would choose the disciplined Thomas Ford, who served as Illinois governor in the 1840s. He found a way to guide the frontier state out of massive debt for infrastructure, including the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the effort to build state-owned railroads — despite opposition from within his party.



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Ford saw that repudiating the debt would hurt development of the state. Howard again: "He was convinced, as he stated in his inaugural message, that somehow principal and interest must be paid in full. He had confidence in the people and the future of Illinois, and he assured creditors that the money could be raised in due time by moderate taxation."

Which brings me to my third choice in the category of visionary political leadership. Richard Ogilvie, Illinois' 35th governor, also sized up the state's revenue gap and decided, as Howard wrote, that Illinois needed to tax corporate and personal incomes. As a result, Ogilvie pushed to modernize the state's tax system, along with the structure of state government.

For me, the definition of leadership is the ability to envision what would be best for Illinois' future and the energy to make it happen, despite opposition.

Yet I would argue Illinois also has been led by colorful, complex characters who could be called sinner and saint in one, governors who combined personal failings with political courage. In this category, I would put John Peter Altgeld, who pardoned the Chicago anarchists, and George Ryan, who emptied the state's Death Row.

But it's your call, too. Read the new book and decide for yourself. See page 2 in this issue for information on how to order your copy. □

Peggy Boyer Long can be reached at peggyboy@aol.com.

Hall of Fame Statehouse media interns to be honored

Illinois Issues and WUIS public radio teamed up to establish an award honoring graduates of the University of Illinois' Public Affairs Reporting program.

The Bill Miller Public Affairs Reporting Hall of Fame Award will be given every other year to recognize PAR graduates who have distinguished careers in journalism. The Hall will be a testimony to its inductees and to the late Bill Miller, director of the PAR program for 19 years until his retirement in 1993.

The program, founded in 1972 by former U.S. Sen. Paul Simon, continues to provide a unique learning experience for journalists seeking careers in public affairs reporting. The signature element distinguishing it from other journalism programs is a six-month internship in which PAR students work as full-time reporters for print and broadcast media outlets in the Illinois Statehouse Press Room. Through 2005, the program has awarded 522 master's degrees to its graduates. Roughly half of the members of the Illinois Statehouse press corps are now PAR alums.

Illinois Issues and WUIS are part of the Center for State Policy and Leadership at the university. Both maintain bureaus in the Illinois Statehouse and have helped train PAR interns for the past three decades.

A special committee will select up to three individuals to be inducted in even-numbered years. They will be honored at a reception to be held in Springfield in the fall of those years. A permanent plaque honoring all inductees will hang in the Statehouse Press Room.

This year's inductees will be named in October and honored at a reception to be held 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday, November 13, at the Inn at 835. Tickets will cost \$30 per person.

Peter Overby, a political correspondent for National Public Radio, has agreed to serve as the keynote speaker. In 2002, Overby received an Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Silver Baton, one of the highest honors in broadcast news, for reporting that "set the bar for stories about money, power and political influence." His byline has appeared in *The Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *The Washington Monthly*.

For information on tickets, call 217-206-6084. □

Illinois Issues

A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield

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Other states have Illinois beat when it comes to providing students with meals to start the day.

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Credits: The photographic illustration on our cover includes a portrait of an Illinois coal miner that was taken by William "Doc" Horrell. It comes to us courtesy of Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

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Bethany Carson



Education reform is more about ensuring quality results than about finding new dollars

by Bethany Carson

There are winners and losers in the state's education system. Schools in wealthy regions can afford to spend \$25,000 on each student, while those in poor areas can only afford about \$5,000 per student.

In recent years, the debate on school finance reform has focused on finding ways to increase and equalize school spending. At the heart of the debate is whether Illinois should shift the burden of funding elementary and secondary schools from the local property tax to the state income tax. But voters' fears of tax hikes keep that issue under the political table.

Yet finding ways to raise education dollars is only one side of the equation. How the state spends the money is the other. Distribution of Illinois tax dollars affects students' ability to learn and ultimately grow into productive, responsible adults.

George Clowes, senior fellow with the Chicago-based Heartland Institute, takes that a step further. "If we fail to improve the education of our students for very much longer, it's really going to affect the way that we compete with nations around the world."

He supports a completely different idea, a so-called choice-based approach wherein the money follows the student rather than the teacher — and parents, rather than administrators, decide how to spend their tax dollars.

While most of the attention centers on the candidates' revenue ideas, voters shouldn't be distracted from their plans for education quality.

To get to the root of Illinois' problem, however, researchers say everyone needs to take a step back. Reforming education isn't about raising the dollars, they say, as much as about results.

Case in point: The state has generally increased the amount of money put toward education — from \$4.9 billion in 2000 to \$6.5 billion this fiscal year. Some lawmakers and advocates ask why that additional money hasn't translated into more equitable educational opportunities in those schools with the highest percentage of minority and low-income students.

The question is, "What are we getting for our money?" Timing for this discussion couldn't be better. Illinoisans will get the chance November 7 to pick the person they want to lead the state for the next four years: Democratic incumbent Gov. Rod Blagojevich of Chicago, GOP state Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka of Riverside or Green Party candidate Rich Whitney of Carbondale.

While most of the attention centers on

the candidates' revenue ideas, voters shouldn't be distracted from their plans for education quality.

Those plans were graded by the A+ Illinois coalition, which consists of more than 100 civic, education and business groups, among them AFSCME Council 31, which represents public employees, the nonprofit Center for Tax and Budget Accountability and the Metropolitan Planning Council. The coalition aims to improve education equity and reduce the state's reliance on property taxes in funding schools, mainly through a tax swap.

The group gave Blagojevich a "D-" for pledging not to raise income or sales taxes if he's re-elected. Instead, he would privatize the Illinois Lottery, which he says would garner up to \$15 billion to fund his \$6 billion education plan and pump \$650 million into schools each year until at least 2025.

MarySue Barrett, president of the Metropolitan Planning Council and a member of the coalition, says the group dislikes the idea of selling state assets for one-time revenue sources.

Topinka didn't do much better on that score. She got a "D+" from the coalition for proposing a new casino in Chicago and authorizing expansion of the state's nine other riverboats. Topinka says she won't rule out a tax hike but would consider it a last resort. But she estimates her casino plan would generate \$5 billion

over four years, immediately funnel \$650 million into schools and ensure \$600 million each year thereafter. Her report card from the coalition notes that revenue idea also lacks stability.

Only Whitney supports a tax swap — though as a third-party candidate he's not getting much of a hearing on the issue. Because he didn't get on the November ballot until late August, he wasn't initially graded by A+ Illinois. His report card was scheduled to be available after press time.

Though A+ Illinois' report on Blagojevich and Topinka docks them for their revenue ideas, it rewards them for their efforts to help schools that have academically struggling and needy students.

For instance, both promise to raise the minimum amount guaranteed per student. Yet neither would reach the \$6,400 level recommended by the Education Funding Advisory Board, which was created by a 1997 law and is responsible for making education funding recommendations to the General Assembly.

Those candidates' other initiatives resemble each other, with some differences in how they package the money.

Both would dedicate \$180 million to expanding preschool, but Blagojevich promises \$60 million annually for at least three years and Topinka promises \$30 million for each of the next six years.

Blagojevich's "B—" rewards his plan for mentoring teachers and administrators, but makes no comment on his plan to make teachers accountable through "performance-based pay," partially measured by students' test scores. His report card says his plan lacks detail in how he would measure the quality and impact of his programs.

Topinka's "B+" gives her a slight edge for offering a \$5,000 stipend to teachers who agree to teach in struggling schools, as well as \$250 million in grants to under-performing schools that show how they would help students meet state learning standards.

Clowes, the Heartland researcher, has a different idea about how to make teachers and principals accountable to students' needs. He would allow parents to use tax-funded vouchers or tax credits to send their children to any public school they wanted. Then, he says, principals would become accountable to the parents. "If

you want to have influence over the way money is spent, then you have to raise it locally and you have to spend it locally," he adds. "Once it gets to a higher level, then there are all kinds of special interests that will try to swing it to their favorite funding destination."

That, he says, contributes to the "maldistribution of teachers" and the unmet needs of students, as reported by the Education Trust, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit research and advocacy group.

Out of all the reforms tried, he says, "none of them has proven very effective in changing the thing that everyone wants to change, and that is improving student achievement."

Regardless of which approach is on the table, the universal question for parents, teachers, unions, principals, business leaders, mayors and lawmakers is, "What are we currently getting for our money?"

This election season could be the best time to discuss any education reform plans on, or even near, the table. □

Bethany Carson can be reached at capitolbureau@aol.com.

Statewide lineup

Voters will have three choices for each statewide office. For more information on these races, watch Illinois Issues' Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>.

Lieutenant governor

Pat Quinn, Democrat of Chicago, incumbent running with Gov. Rod Blagojevich. He served as Illinois treasurer from 1991 to 1995.

Joe Birkett, Republican of Wheaton, running mate of Judy Baar Topinka. He served three terms as the DuPage County state's attorney. He lost a 2002 bid for Illinois attorney general.

Julie Samuels, Green Party of Oak Park, running with Rich Whitney. She is a community organizer for Openlands, a nonprofit that promotes land preservation. She twice ran for a seat in House District 8.

Attorney general

Lisa Madigan, incumbent Democrat of Chicago. She was an attorney for the Chicago law firm Sachnoff & Weaver and

an Illinois senator for the 17th District from 1999 to 2003.

Stewart Umholtz, Republican of Pekin. He has been the Tazewell County state's attorney since 1995.

David Black, Green Party of Belvidere. He's an attorney, Winnebago Boone Green Party treasurer and Illinois Green Party secretary.

Secretary of state

Jesse White, Democrat of Chicago, incumbent since 1999. He was the Cook County recorder of deeds from 1993 to 1999 and a state representative from 1975 to 1977 and 1979 to 1993.

Dan Rutherford, Republican of Chenoa. He served in the Illinois Senate from 2003 to 2007 and in the House from 1993 to 2003.

Karen "Young" Peterson, Green Party of Chicago. She works in commercial radio and has taught at Columbia College Chicago.

Comptroller

Dan Hynes, Democrat of Chicago,

incumbent since 1999. Prior to taking office, he was a health care attorney for a Chicago law firm now called Katten Muchin Rosenman.

Carole Pankau, Republican of Itasca. She served in the Illinois Senate from 2005 to present, in the House from 1993 to 2005 and on the DuPage County Board from 1984 to 1992.

Alicia Snyder, Green Party of Centralia. She is a special education teacher.

Treasurer

Christine Radogno, Republican of Lemont. She served in the Illinois Senate from 1997 to present and on the LaGrange Village Board from 1989 to 1996.

Alexander "Alexi" Giannoulis, Democrat of Chicago. He is vice president and a senior loan officer in his family's Broadway Bank.

Dan Rodriguez Schlorff, Green Party of Chicago. He manages grants and procurement for his family's development firm, Adair Associates. □

BRIEFLY

ELECTION 2006

Immigration growth could affect the vote

Illinois' immigrant population has increased by 177,000 since 2000, and almost all of the growth took place in the suburbs. That's according to new numbers from the U.S. Census Bureau compiled by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

Chicago lost 5 percent of its immigrant population — the first drop in four decades — while the immigrant population in the suburbs grew by 24 percent. This demographic shift out of the city could have implications for the fall elections, particularly in the tight suburban congressional races in the 6th and 8th districts, says the study's researcher, Rob Paral of the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

"There is a lot of energy, there is a lot of registration." Most incumbents are safe, Paral says, but in some suburban districts with close races, such as Republican U.S. Rep. Henry Hyde's open seat and freshman Democrat U.S. Rep. Melissa Bean's seat, immigrants could be "much more of a force."

The coalition calls the immigrants and their U.S.-born children Illinois' new "swing" vote.

The mid-decade census data shows immigrants now make up 44 percent of the population in the west suburban 6th District. That seat is being vacated by Hyde of Wood Dale. Barrington resident Bean's mainly northwest suburban 8th District counts



Protesters gathered earlier this year for a vigil at the Batavia office of U.S. House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert. They were promoting expanded rights for undocumented immigrants.

33 percent of the population as immigrant and first-generation.

Meanwhile, 40 percent of the predominantly north suburban 10th District represented by U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, a Highland Park Republican, is comprised of immigrants and their children. And immigrants make up 30 percent of the sprawling 14th District, which is represented by Republican U.S. House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert.

The actions of Hastert's Republican-controlled House have energized this constituency and led to demonstrations nationwide. Over the Labor Day weekend, nearly 300 people marched the 50 miles from Chicago's Chinatown to Hastert's Batavia office for a rally that grew to

more than 2,000.

Hastert helped get legislation approved last year that would tighten restrictions on undocumented immigrants. This year, the House stalled the Senate's immigration reform bill, which includes provisions aimed at helping the nation's estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants along the path to citizenship.

Illinois remains among the top destinations for immigrants. The recent census data shows the number of naturalized citizens in this state jumped from 597,911 in 2000 to 736,161 in 2005, a 23 percent increase. The number of naturalized citizens living in the suburbs, meanwhile, jumped 38 percent in the past five years and totals 460,000.

Beverley Scobell

Telecommunications

The Illinois Commerce Commission adopted a compromise between AT&T and the consumer watchdog Citizens Utility Board. The move reclassified AT&T's residential local phone service as "competitive" in northern Illinois. In effect, AT&T is now free from restrictions on rate increases for packaged services. In exchange, AT&T agreed to limit annual rate increases for four years, capping the increase for monthly

charges on a local phone line to \$1. (See *Illinois Issues*, May, page 28).

Opponents of the move included the Illinois attorney general's office, which argued low-income and low-usage consumers will bear the brunt of higher monthly phone bills on local calls without getting a choice of phone companies.

Bethany Carson

For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

FOCUS ON GAMING

Candidates see a way to avoid raising taxes

Republican gubernatorial candidate Judy Baar Topinka wants a casino in Chicago. Democratic incumbent Gov. Rod Blagojevich would sell or lease the Illinois Lottery. Both proposals are aimed at generating state income without raising general taxes.

Topinka, who is Illinois treasurer, estimated her proposal would raise \$5 billion in new revenue over four years. Aside from revenue generated by a Chicago casino, she proposes that the state's nine other riverboats — "out of fairness" — be allowed to increase their gaming positions from a limit of 1,200 to 3,000, which would raise additional revenue for the state.

The proposal constitutes a major portion of her overall budget plan. She says the casino profits would allow the state to freeze local property taxes for two years, suspend the state sales tax on gasoline if prices exceed \$2.50, fully fund the state's public employee pension obligations, lower college tuition, build new roads and schools — including projects that have been on hold for three years — and allow the state to trim spending.

AFSCME Council 31, which represents state employees, believes Topinka's plan is a welcome first step toward broadening the dialogue about the state's fiscal "crisis," says spokesman Anders Lindall. "The reliance on a Chicago casino or other gaming revenues, we don't think it's a panacea," he says. "But it is better than the governor's proposal to sell the lottery. Selling any long-term asset that now provides a constant revenue for the state in return for a one-time revenue source is a short-sighted, irresponsible proposal."

Blagojevich, who is running for a second term, estimates his proposal to privatize the lottery could generate \$6 billion in new education funding over four years.

He says he won't increase state taxes, while Topinka hasn't ruled it out.

One gubernatorial hopeful who supports tax reform and opposes gaming as a way to generate revenue is Green Party candidate Rich Whitney of Carbondale. He equates gambling with a "hidden tax on the poor."

Whitney's proposed budget would entail a so-called tax swap designed to reduce the state's reliance on property taxes to fund education. That idea has been proposed many times, but it remains politically unpopular.

Bethany Carson

Sunset on a health panel

An independent state agency that's supposed to save state dollars and ensure access to health care could cease to exist next April if the Illinois General Assembly doesn't extend a statutory sunset.

The Health Facilities Planning Board approves or denies construction projects proposed by hospitals, nursing homes, emergency centers and other medical facilities. The process was designed to prevent unnecessary construction projects, help curb health care costs and ensure communities have access to adequate health services. But the effectiveness came under scrutiny after the feds began investigating whether politics played a role in the approval of a Crystal Lake hospital project. Gov. Rod Blagojevich revamped the panel in 2004, but allegations of political influence in connection with his appointees continue.

Senate Republicans, meanwhile, created a task force to study the board's future. State Sen. Bill Brady, a Bloomington Republican, led hearings on the issue. His panel is considering the board's structure and the application process for medical facilities. "We intend to come forward with legislation, rulemaking and maybe even a resolution about this," Brady says. If the board ceases to exist, he says, it would become an open system. "Some states have done that. We're not suggesting whether that's better or not."

According to Jeffrey Mark, executive secretary for the board, 36 states plus the District of Columbia maintain programs that are similar to Illinois' current system.

Illinois' board, which has four voting members and one vacancy, already has enacted revisions that Mark says comprise one-third of all its rules. While the board reviews its system for approving applications, it's up to the General Assembly to decide the makeup of the board and whether it should exist after next spring. "We are all supportive of an extension of the sunset," Mark says, "strongly supportive."

Bethany Carson

Tollway totals

If Illinois leased its entire tollway system, the state could garner anywhere from \$1 billion to \$24 billion in fast cash, according to one firm's estimate.

Credit Suisse, an investment banking firm hired by the state for \$30,000, analyzed the Illinois tollway system's value and ways in which the state could maximize that value if it partnered with private investors.

Chicago entered a 99-year lease of its Chicago Skyway for \$1.8 billion in 2004. Indiana also stands to gain \$3.8 billion from a 75-year lease of the Indiana Toll Road (see *Illinois Issues*, June, page 28).

Illinois' system includes 274 miles of road on four tollways, along with a fiber optic network that runs beneath them. Lawmakers wouldn't have to sell the asset at one time, but Credit Suisse reports the state would face some "residual risks" if it sold the tollway in parts.

"A 1 percent change here in interest rate has a meaningful impact on what value the state holds at any given time," said Alex Erlikh, project finance associate for Credit Suisse, during the company's presentation to a state commission.

Steve Doll, director of Credit Suisse, stressed that the tollway system's value would be sensitive to slight movements in a number of factors, such as when annual toll increases kick in, how fast traffic patterns change and what kind of restrictions the state places on investors.

For instance, a 75-year lease that allowed a 3 percent toll increase each year starting in 2007 could generate between \$5.8 billion and \$8.3 billion. That's if traffic increased by 1 percent a year.

Not all agree the risk is worth it. "There are no free lunches in public finance," said Hank Scheff, research director for AFSCME Council 31. "Tollway employees are wondering what the state has in store for them."

State Sen. Jeff Schoenberg, an Evanston Democrat who co-chairs the bipartisan commission that hired Credit Suisse, says some of the profits under the plan should be set aside as a cushion and the rest spent on improving transportation systems and reducing the state's unfunded employee pension liability. Lawmakers could discuss the idea when they convene next month.

Bethany Carson

Higher tuition hikes students' debts

In the 2006-2007 school year, tuition and fees increased by an average of 12.2 percent at Illinois' 12 four-year public universities. And, no surprise, more Illinois students are taking out loans as repeated tuition increases topped national averages.

Last year tuition and fees at Illinois' four-year public universities jumped an average of 11.9 percent as compared to a 6.7 percent average annual increase nationwide, according to the College Board's Annual Survey of Colleges. And though tuition and borrowing have been rising nationally over the past 10 years, Illinois students' cost increases have been higher.

On average, Illinois undergraduates at four-year public universities paid \$7,214 in tuition and fees for the 2005-2006 school year, compared to a national average of \$5,489. And Illinois was one of only 11 states that school year to show an average tuition increase of more than 10 percent, according to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

University officials have associated these recent increases with insufficient state fund-

ing for higher education. State funding for higher education was cut in fiscal years 2003, 2004 and 2005. Also, the "truth-in-tuition" law, which took effect in fall 2004, freezes rates for students at the freshman-year level for all four years. That guarantee has spurred institutions to incorporate projected cost increases into the starting-year tuition.

"All state schools are pretty much in the same boat," says Vicki Woodard, director of communications for Eastern Illinois University in Charleston. "The only income we have is state-appropriated funds and tuition." At EIU, in-state undergraduates entering this fall will pay \$173.55 per semester hour, an 11 percent increase from the previous year.

While the state's fiscal years 2006 and 2007 budgets granted higher ed 2 percent and 1.4 percent increases, respectively, this comes too little, too late, says Woodard. "That's the first increase we've had in a few years now, and our costs have outgrown that. We want to keep the quality we offer."

More students are seeking financial aid to fund college, and they are borrowing more, says Larry Matejka, executive director of

the Illinois Student Assistance Commission. In the 10-year period between fiscal years 1994 and 2004, aid distributed to Illinois students climbed 138 percent from \$2 billion to \$4.8 billion. Loans accounted for the majority of that aid.

The costliness of Illinois higher education, combined with the increase in student borrowing, prompted the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education to give Illinois an "F" in affordability on its annual report card for 2006, down from the "A" it received in 2002.

Meanwhile, federal assistance to students has not increased to match the growing expense of higher education, says U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin of Illinois, who has proposed a measure to halve college loan interest rates. Student interest rates were recently fixed at a higher level.

"Putting that in practical terms, it means it will take a much longer period of time for these students to pay off their student debt."

Matejka says, "People are at their maximum that they can borrow through federal programs, and they're looking at alternative and private loans. What's the point where you can't stretch it anymore?" *Vera Leopold*



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Online meth registry goes up by year's end

The Illinois State Police is creating an online registry of individuals convicted of making or dealing methamphetamine. It will include the names of those convicted, the offenders' dates of birth and the counties where the offenses occurred. Gov. Rod Blagojevich signed off on the legislative initiative this summer.

"This is an informational tool that would be easily accessible not only for law enforcement and local prosecutors, but also private citizens," says the measure's sponsor, state Sen. William Haine, an Alton Democrat.

The registry will make it easier to monitor meth-makers, who move around and often have ties to meth even after convictions, says State Police spokesman Lincoln Hampton.

Haine says meth cooks often handle chemicals in residential areas or around children, and the process can result in explosions and toxic spills. "The manufacture of meth is not only criminal, it is remarkably irresponsible," he says. "It seems to me, someone who exercises that type of criminal irresponsibility should be noted by the community in a special way."

Previous meth-related legislation has increased penalties for trafficking and placed stricter controls on meth's precursor elements, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, common ingredients of over-the-counter cold medicine (see *Illinois Issues*, September 2005, page 16). Another measure established Meth Response Teams under the State Police.

Creating the registry finishes the mosaic, says Haine, who also sponsored most of the earlier meth legislation. "It's not the silver bullet, it's not as important as some of the other measures, but [the registry] is a way to complete the meth effort that we've been working on for the past four sessions."

The use and production of the powerful stimulant emerged as a problem in Illinois in 1997 when 24 meth labs were seized. Last year, the number of labs discovered had grown to 973, most of them in rural areas of southern and central Illinois.

"It's tough to say if we're turning the tide," says Hampton, "but we do feel that we're getting a better [handle] on it."

Vera Leopold

Roofs of soy

Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn, who says he wants to make Illinois the soybean-roof capital of the world, is promoting a new product that uses the home-grown crop to produce a sealant.

The nontoxic, flame-resistant and waterproof soy-polymer roofing material was developed with funding from the United Soybean Board's soybean checkoff. So far, several Illinois organizations have installed the product atop their buildings, including the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, the University of Illinois at Chicago and, recently, U.S. Equities Realty on Chicago's Magnificent Mile.

Quinn says he sees an innovative strategy for reducing foreign oil dependence and conserving energy while expanding the market for Illinois soybeans. The material provides an alternative to petroleum-based black asphalt. And because soybean roofs are white, they are highly reflective, retaining less heat. In cities, that can help reduce the urban heat island effect and the need for air conditioning.

"[Using soybean roofs] is one way to become more energy-efficient in Illinois, and we've got to do that in the 21st century," Quinn says. "Illinois farmers are really the key to a good energy future for our state and for our country. It's much better to rely on Midwest farmers than Middle Eastern countries."

Illinois is the top soybean producer, providing about 20 percent of the nation's supply, says Ron Kindred, a director of the Illinois Soybean Association. Roofing adds to the long list of uses for the legume, including biodiesel and candles.

Buildings with soybean roofs can have significantly lower energy bills. In 2004, the Shedd Aquarium spread the equivalent of 36 acres of Illinois soybeans on its roof. Over the roof's estimated 20-year life span, the museum expects to save at least \$219,000 in utility fees by running the air conditioning less.

In late summer, Quinn visited Greenview High School near Springfield, which has a soybean roof. The soy-based coating proved the least expensive option for restoring a roof after a storm, says Gary DePatis, the school district's superintendent. He hopes to put soybean roofs on other school buildings, especially one that lacks air conditioning. The product was developed by Green Products, a Romeoville company that specializes in environmentally friendly building materials. Grants for installing soybean roofs are available through the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation.

Photograph by Vera Leopold



From left: Gary DePatis, superintendent of schools in Greenview, and Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn talk with Kyle Walter atop Greenview High School's roof, which has been sealed with a waterproof polymer made of soy.

QUOTABLE

“Cynicism is inconsistent with patriotism.”

U.S. Judge Rebecca Pallmeyer while sentencing former Gov. George Ryan to 6 1/2 years on corruption charges, as reported by Mike Ramsey of Copley News Service. Pallmeyer told Ryan that he had made people cynical by failing to measure up to the high standards of public office and not conceding the seriousness of his crimes.

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Professor farmers

Illinois agricultural scientists tied their research during the 2006 growing season to fields as diverse as economies and the environment.

In southern Illinois, one researcher looked at ways to plant and harvest tomatoes earlier, while in central Illinois others worked to determine what effect greenhouse gases have on crop growth and how to turn the orange-colored seed of a desert flower into industrial oil.

By May 1, Alan Walters had grown golf-ball-sized green tomatoes in plastic-covered rows of a vegetable plot at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, where he is an associate professor in the soil and agricultural systems department.

He says he's trying to push the season ahead because the earlier tomatoes go to market, the higher the prices farmers can demand. Walters is comparing the growth of unprotected plants to those covered in slitted polyethylene and those blanketed by cloth.

Meanwhile, scientists at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign subjected food crops to projected carbon dioxide levels. Such crops as wheat and soybeans had about 50 percent lower yields at harvest than those exposed to lower levels of greenhouse gases.

In Peoria, at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research, scientists continued to seek out lesquerella oil's potential uses in such products as crank oil, plastics and cosmetics. Lesquerella, much like castor oil, which must be imported, is rich in industrially useful hydroxy fatty acids.

Lesquerella fendleri, commonly known as the Fendler bladderpod, is a spring-blooming yellow flower grown in the Southwest, mainly in Arizona. The plant produces round bladders that contain the seed used to make lesquerella oil.

The Editors

Photograph by L. Brian Stauffer, courtesy of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



Stephen Loug, a University of Illinois crop scientist and plant biologist, right, stands in a research test plot with plant biology professor Elizabeth Ainsworth and Andrew Leakey, a research fellow in the university's Institute for Genomic Biology.



Photograph courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service



Geneticist Anson Thompson holds a vial of lesquerella oil that was processed and refined at the USDA's National Center for Agricultural Utilization Research in Peoria.

Photograph courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service



The USDA stores its soybean germplasm collection at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Photograph courtesy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service



Lesquerella fendleri, an interest of ag researchers in Illinois, covers this field in Arizona with bright, yellow blooms.



Colors and crafts

Time for a change of scenery? Here's a sampler of October fall events:

- **Spoon River Valley Fall Festival**, weekends of 7-8 and 14-15. Towns along a scenic drive through the western Illinois woodlands offer food, music and crafts.
- **St. Charles Scarecrow Festival**, 6-8. Event includes entertainment.
- **Union County Colorfest**, 13-15. As part of the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail, towns throughout the county host arts and crafts fairs.
- **Sycamore Pumpkin Festival**, 25-29, in DeKalb County.

UPDATES

- Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan ruled that former Gov. George Ryan should forfeit his annual \$197,000 state pension because of his corruption conviction (see *Illinois Issues*, May, page 9).
- The Illinois State Museum last month presented a Kenyan delegation with a memorial post for return to an African family from which it had been stolen (see *Illinois Issues*, June, page 8).
- Chicago is slated to host the annual international biotechnology trade convention BIO in 2010 (see *Illinois Issues*, May, page 15).

BOOKSHELF

Religion and politics

Close to a dozen new books that examine the connections between politics and religion are due out before the general election, in addition to several already on the shelves.

Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright makes the case that political leaders need to better understand religion's role in the world in *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs* (HarperCollins, 2006).

She is critical of how President George W. Bush's administration handles religion. "We are not above the law," she writes, "nor do we have a divine calling to spread democracy any more than we have a national mission to spread Christianity." She describes the rhetoric of Bush and his administration as coming close "to justifying U.S. policy in explicitly religious terms — and that is like waving a red flag in front of a bull."

Muslims react negatively, fearing Christianity is being forced on them. "If religion and politics are harnessed properly, they can be a force for justice and peace," Albright argues for more understanding of Islam as a way to reach peace in the Middle East.

Reza Aslan, a scholar of world religions, offers a primer in Muslim history. In *No god but God: The Origins, Evolution, and Future of Islam* (Random House, 2005, now in paperback), he gives an explanation of the fastest-growing religion in the world. He wants readers to see this book as an argument for reform. "For most of the Western world, September 11, 2001, signaled the commencement of a worldwide struggle between Islam and the West — the ultimate manifestation of the clash of civilizations. From the Islamic perspective, however, the attacks on New York and Washington were part of an ongoing clash between those Muslims who strive to reconcile their religious values with the realities of the modern world, and those who react to modernism and reform by reverting — sometimes fanatically — to the 'fundamentals' of their faith."

In *Thy Kingdom Come: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America, an Evangelical's Lament* (Basic Books, 2006), Randall Balmer reviews this generation of evangelical leaders, whom he sees as having hijacked the faith on behalf of the GOP. The evangelical historian of American religion reminds readers that for most of its history evangelicism advanced progressive causes: abolition, suffrage and public education. "The agenda of the Republican-religious-right coalition is utterly dissonant with the distinguished record of evangelical activists in the 19th century. They interpreted the teachings of Jesus to mean that, yes, they really did bear responsibility for those on the margins of society, especially for the emancipation of slaves and the rights of women." *Beverley Scobell*

Pols' talk of religion troubles voters

Americans are increasingly uncomfortable with the political uses of religion by liberals and conservatives, according to the latest poll from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. More than two-thirds of the respondents think liberals have gone too far in trying to keep religion out of schools and government. Yet almost half think conservative Christians have gone too far in trying to impose their religious beliefs on the country.

Though Republicans are seen as having a "more friendly" attitude toward religion than Democrats — 47 percent to 26 percent — that gap narrowed in the past year. In 2005, 55 percent said the GOP is friendly to religion. Most of the drop reflected a change among white evangelical Protestants, whose support for the party on that issue slipped 14 percent.

The survey found that religious conservatives, and white evangelical Christians specifically, face no comparable alternative on the religious left. White evangelical Christians comprise 24 percent of the population and "form a distinct group whose members share core religious beliefs, as well as crystallized and consistently conservative political attitudes." On the left, 32 percent of the respondents identified themselves as "liberal or progressive Christians." But those respondents disagree "almost as often as they agree on a number of key political and social issues," the survey concluded.

The survey also assessed attitudes toward religion's role in the nation, including the relationship between science and religion. The poll, conducted by the forum and the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, surveyed 2,003 adults July 6-19. The results can be viewed at <http://people-press.org>.

Beverley Scobell

The dirt on clean energy

What you won't hear
about ethanol in a 30-second campaign spot

by Pat Guinane

If every acre of U.S. corn went from the farm field to the fuel pump, ethanol still would fall woefully short of quenching our nation's thirst for fossil fuels. That conclusion came this summer from University of Minnesota researchers, who had only slightly better news for backers of soybean-based biodiesel.

Together, the study asserts, this pair of politically enchanted biofuels has the potential to meet only 18 percent of the nation's transportation fuel needs. Like any source of energy, biofuels — especially corn ethanol — have their inherent drawbacks. But, spurred by subsidies and quotas in the latest federal energy bill, biofuels are booming. The costs and benefits are questionable. The momentum is not.

Try finding a politician, even outside the Midwest, who doesn't see ethanol as an energy elixir capable of running cars and creating jobs. The reality is that it will take much more than corn to wean America from the addiction that President George W. Bush — a former Texas oil man himself — admitted to in this year's State of the Union address.

Like a heroin addict moving to methadone, the country is replacing its oil habit with a chemical that arguably is only marginally better for us. Like hard drugs, foreign oil brings the prospect of death, in this case through military involvement in unstable oil-rich regions. Corn-based ethanol instead fosters a costly system of dependence in return



for what could be considered paltry public benefits.

Ethanol is not new. In fact, much like the flex-fuel vehicles American automakers have been rolling out the past decade, the first commercial automobile — Henry Ford's Model T — was a hybrid capable of running on either ethanol or gasoline. In composition, ethanol is no different from moonshine, and a Tennessee company even markets modified stills for those who would like to homebrew their way to cheaper gas.

For less intrepid folks, the cost of ethanol is a more complex concoction. The fuel was widely used as a lamp oil prior to the Civil War, but in the absence

of government subsidies and favorable regulatory policies, ethanol has never held a candle to crude.

But in terms of political buzz, biofuels may have cornered today's market, even though ethanol and biodiesel account for only 3 percent of U.S. transportation fuel consumption. The industry got its first major government handout in 1978, with Congress granting a 4-cent fuel tax exemption on gasoline blended with at least 10 percent ethanol. The subsidy — worth 40 cents per gallon of pure ethanol — came amid a national energy crisis and shortly after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency began to phase out leaded gasoline. A decade later, ethanol gained ground as a fuel additive capable of reducing tailpipe emissions. Ethanol's use as an oxygenate ramped up further in recent years as its main competitor, methyl tertiary butyl ether, or MTBE, has been linked to groundwater contamination and banned by more than a dozen states, including Illinois.

As the federal gas tax has increased, so too has ethanol's subsidy. The tax break, which peaked at 60 cents per gallon in the 1980s, sapped at least \$7.5 billion in federal highway funds the first 21 years it was on the books, the U.S. Government Accounting Office estimated in 2000. Refiners and blenders currently receive a tax exemption equal to 51 cents per gallon of pure ethanol. And the product has been protected since 1980 by a 54-cent tariff on ethanol imports.

The Midwest marks the epicenter

of the biofuels boom, and Archer Daniels Midland is perhaps the greatest beneficiary. The Decatur-based agricultural behemoth, which did not respond to interview requests, is the nation's largest ethanol producer. And while ADM's market share will decrease as a new crop of production plants comes online, the company currently controls more than a fifth of the country's ethanol production capacity.

Most of the new plants under construction will be dry mill operations built specifically to process ethanol. ADM and other top producers employ much larger biorefineries that, through wet milling, can churn out either ethanol or high-fructose corn syrup, a sugar substitute found in soft drinks. Both methods generate byproducts known as distillers grains, high-protein feedstocks sold to cattle, hog and poultry operations.

More than 40 new ethanol plants are being built. Once operational, they will increase domestic production capacity by nearly 3 million gallons a year. Meanwhile, U.S. producers have sought to block efforts to boost foreign ethanol imports.

As gas prices began to climb this spring, the oil industry attributed some of the spike to refiners shifting from MTBE to ethanol. President Bush roiled Midwest ag interests by suggesting Congress lift the U.S. ethanol tariff, a move that would clear the way for sugar-based Brazilian imports. Key Democrats, including U.S. Sens. Barack Obama and Richard Durbin of Illinois, rebuked the proposal in a stern letter to the president.

"We should learn from Brazil," Durbin says of his stance. "When they made a national decision several decades ago to reduce their dependence on foreign oil, they created their own alcohol fuels industry and established a tariff so that they could encourage Brazilian producers to make capital investments. It worked. They ended up with a viable alcohol fuels industry, which now fuels their economy. President Bush's suggestion would have created real uncertainty among the investors in new American

Uses of the 81 million acres of corn grown in the United States



Graphic by Nicolle Rager Fuller, courtesy of the National Science Foundation

ethanol plants. I think it was a very short-sighted response."

Until recently, biofuels were indeed risky business here in the United States. The 1970s energy crisis and the policies of President Jimmy Carter sparked the first ethanol building boom, to a peak of 163 plants by the early 1980s. But oil prices plummeted a few years later, drying up the ethanol market and shuttering more than half of all U.S. production sites.

The fuel began to rebound in the 1990s, spurred by federal policies calling for greater use of emissions-reducing gasoline blends. Today, as observers of the Illinois governor's race can attest, politicians across the Midwest are practically tripping over one another to promote biofuels.

State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka, the Republican candidate for governor, released an energy plan in August that would mandate renewable energy use by utilities, require that all Illinois gasoline contain at least 10 percent ethanol and create a \$500 million loan program for biofuel facilities, wind farms and biomass electric plants.

Not to be outdone, Gov. Rod Blagojevich, a first-term Democrat running for re-election against Topinka, unveiled his own plan a week later. It would have the state spend \$1.2 billion over 10 years to promote investment in energy efficiency efforts, clean-coal technology and bio-fuels, including 20 new ethanol plants.

"Before the governor was elected [in 2002], there was no regular agency

program to support the development of new production facilities in Illinois," says Hans Detweiler, deputy director of energy and recycling for the state Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. "There was no program where if you wanted to build an ethanol plant or a biodiesel plant you could get a grant to do that."

Over the past three years, Illinois has doled out \$30 million in grants and tax credits to help build two biodiesel plants, four ethanol production sites and one major ethanol facility

expansion. Another \$500,000 in state money has helped increase the number of Illinois retailers that sell E85 — a blend of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline — from just 14 stations in 2004 to about 130 today. Illinois also waives the state sales tax for E85 and for diesel blends containing more than 10 percent soy.

Indiana, meanwhile, was home to just one ethanol plant when Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels took office last year. The state has allocated \$50 million over the past 18 months to attract a dozen new ethanol production sites and three biodiesel facilities.

These state handouts come on top of the federal tax exemption and mandates in the 2005 energy bill, which requires oil refiners to use at least 4 billion gallons of renewable fuels this year and 7.5 billion gallons by 2012. This confluence of favorable policies makes renewable energy a green endeavor in more ways than one.

Wallace Tyner, an agricultural economics professor at Purdue University, says the 51-cent federal tax break adds "a little more gravy" to what currently is a very lucrative endeavor.

"Today, the price of ethanol is about \$2.60 a gallon. It's very, very economic without the subsidy," Tyner says. "Even if you take that \$2.60 and convert it to \$2.10, ethanol is still very profitable. It costs about \$1.25 [to produce] at today's corn prices ... so you're making a lot of money on ethanol. The payback period on an ethanol plant today, if prices were to hold through the first

year of production, is less than a year.”

Prices eventually will come down, says Tyner, who suggests Congress consider a sliding-scale subsidy that would trigger the federal tax break only when ethanol becomes unprofitable. Under Tyner’s model, the subsidy would have been off the books in the first half of 2006, but producers still would see their investments protected during lean years brought on by high corn prices or a weak oil market.

Lawmakers, in general, seem loath to criticize the government green available to renewable fuels. “There’s not a single source of energy in this country that is not subsidized,” Sen. Durbin says. “We continue to subsidize the oil industry when the companies are reporting record profits, so to provide a federal tax incentive to alcohol fuels and biofuels is consistent with creating a stable, dependable, affordable source of energy for America.”

In contrast, Sen. John McCain, an Arizona Republican, lashed out three years ago against an early version of the federal energy bill, calling ethanol “the worst subsidy-laden energy use ever perpetrated on the American public.” Add farm supports for corn to the equation, McCain said, and the government underwrites ethanol to the tune of more than \$3 a gallon. Corn receives greater subsidies than any U.S. crop, a total of \$41.9 billion from 1995 to 2004, according to the Environmental Working Group, a nonprofit Washington, D.C.-based research organization. Soybeans rank fifth in subsidies, receiving \$13 billion over the same period.

“The simple truth is that the whole energy industry is incredibly heavily subsidized — the oil industry is subsidized, coal is subsidized, ethanol is subsidized. Everything is subsidized,” says

Detweiler, Illinois’ renewable energy expert. “The only thing, to be fair, would be to propose eliminating all energy subsidies, and I haven’t seen anybody proposing that.”

The benefits of ethanol are no less controversial than the costs. Over the past 25 years, David Pimentel, a researcher and environmental policy professor at Cornell University, has authored several studies showing that ethanol simply isn’t worth the trouble. His most recent work, published in July 2005, concludes that every gallon of ethanol contains 29 percent less energy than it takes to farm the corn, process it into fuel and ship it to market. At the other end of the spectrum, a 2001 U.S. Department of Agriculture report boasts a 67 percent net energy gain for corn ethanol.

The reality lies somewhere in the middle, says Michael Wang, an analyst for the Center for Transportation Research at Argonne National Laboratory. Wang and two other researchers collaborated on a 2002 report to the federal agriculture department, which pegs the net energy gain for ethanol at 34 percent, including some energy credited to the feedstocks produced as a byproduct. Others’ studies, meanwhile, estimate a roughly 25 percent energy benefit for ethanol. Compared to gasoline, Wang

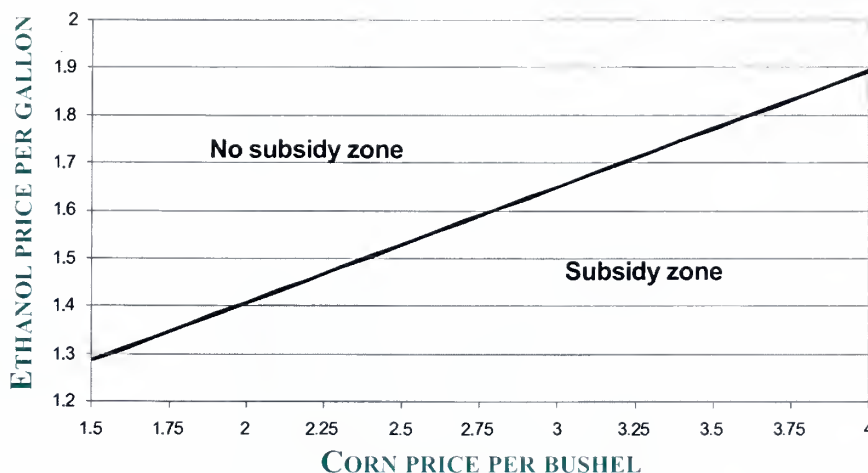
President Bush roiled Midwest ag interests by suggesting Congress lift the U.S. ethanol tariff, a move that would clear the way for sugar-based Brazilian imports.

says, the biofuel also achieves an 18 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Pimentel’s work, derided by the National Corn Growers Association, among others, incorporates energy estimates for the manufacture of farm machinery needed to plant and harvest ethanol crops, and for the caloric energy expended by the farmer. Pimentel’s study draws criticism for potentially understating today’s average crop yields and for overstating contemporary fertilizer applications. “In terms of the energy balance itself,” Wang says, “most people and most studies come to the conclusion that ethanol does have a positive energy balance.”

Skeptics of the varying scientific conclusions might take solace in a study published in January by researchers at the University of California, Berkeley. The group deconstructed six high-profile ethanol studies, including the above referenced works by Pimentel and Wang. The Berkeley study concludes that only 5 percent to 26 percent of the energy produced by ethanol can

A proposal to tie federal ethanol subsidies to market/corn prices



Ethanol producers get a 51-cent-per-gallon break on the federal fuel tax. Purdue University professor Wallace Tyner suggests that federal subsidies should kick in only when corn prices and ethanol’s retail price converge to make ethanol production unprofitable. This chart illustrates his proposal, which he presented at Purdue’s Summit on Energy Security.

be termed “renewable.” The fuel reduces greenhouse gas emissions “only moderately, by about 13 percent,” the study says, and negative environmental impacts, including soil erosion and pollution tied to fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides have yet to be fully evaluated.

Ethanol’s shortcomings also mean more frequent fill-ups for owners of flex-fuel automobiles, specifically those that run on E85. A gallon of ethanol contains less energy than a gallon of gasoline, and experts agree that E85 reduces fuel efficiency by up to 20 percent, depending on the vehicle. A recent road test by *Consumer Reports* is even more pessimistic. The magazine reports that E85 lowered a Chevy Tahoe’s already poor mile-per-gallon rating by 27 percent. The full-size SUV traveled just 300 miles on a tank of E85, a drop of 140 miles compared to gasoline. With E85 averaging a \$2.91 pump price in August, the magazine reports, motorists would have paid about \$3.99 for the energy equivalent of a gallon of gas.

Supporters argue the costs of biofuels must be measured against the benefits of developing homegrown energy. The United States imports about 60 percent of its oil, incurring direct and indirect national security costs that have been estimated at \$300 billion a year. That, says Tyner, the Purdue ag economist, adds at least \$1.70 to every gallon of gasoline — a cost consumers don’t see at the pump.

The reality, as the University of Minnesota researchers concluded, is it will take much more than corn to foster any semblance of American energy independence. Soy-based biodiesel promises a 93 percent net energy gain, much greater than corn ethanol, and posts a better environmental impact — a 41 percent emissions reduction, versus 12 percent for ethanol — the study finds. But the entire U.S. soy crop could supplant only 6 percent of the nation’s diesel needs, the researchers said, adding that fuels “produced from low-input biomass grown on agriculturally marginal land or from waste biomass, could provide much greater supplies and environmental benefits than food-based biofuels.”

Switch grass, wood chips and plant waste, including corn stalks, represent

the next generation of biofuels. These potential fuel crops don’t need prime land or costly fertilizers and pesticides. Energy embedded in the fiber or cell walls of these cheap inputs holds the key to the nascent technology known as cellulosic ethanol.

“For cellulosic ethanol the net benefit becomes huge,” says Wang, the Argonne researcher. “The energy balance becomes 10 to 1. You put in one unit of fossil energy, you get 10 units of energy out. The return ratio is much greater than corn ethanol. And the greenhouse gas reduction — we talk about 18-20 percent for corn ethanol, but for cellulosic ethanol, it’s going to be about 85 percent.”

In many ways, cellulosic ethanol expands the horizon. Unlike oil and gasoline, ethanol cannot be transported by pipeline, an encumbrance that constricted the current biofuel boom to the Corn Belt.

“Switch grass can be grown a lot of places and that’s the exciting aspect,” says U.S. Rep. John Shimkus, a Collinsville Republican who serves on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. “It is what most members of Congress talk about more than anything else because the Midwest Corn Belt is only so big and only applies to so



many members of Congress.

“A lot of people will say, ‘You can’t grow enough corn,’ and they’re right. So, if you can’t grow enough corn, how do we get to more energy security? And that’s through cellulosic.”

Indiana, which is shifting state support to cellulosic efforts, no longer will hand out infrastructure grants to corn ethanol producers. The new technology is nowhere near corn ethanol, experts admit, but Purdue researchers are among those developing the enzymes needed to unlock cellulosic energy.

Illinois, meanwhile, would commit \$100 million to build four cellulosic ethanol plants downstate under Gov. Blagojevich’s energy plan.

“The governor’s proposal is the most significant gubernatorial cellulosic ethanol proposal in the nation,” says Detweiler, the state’s renewable energy guru. “Nobody else has proposed \$100 million in state assistance for cellulosic ethanol. It is the most aggressive cellulosic ethanol plan in the country.”

It’s not yet clear how soon cellulosic ethanol plants could be up and running, though the federal energy bill requires refiners to use a minimum of 250 million gallons of cellulosic fuel a year beginning in 2013. Experts also suggest that existing corn ethanol plants could be retrofitted for cellulosic production.

Who the players will be is another question, but signs point to the nation’s top ethanol producers. U.S. Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman traveled to Decatur in February to announce that \$160 million in federal funds are available to assist in construction of up to three cellulosic biorefineries.

“He announced it at ADM,” Detweiler says. “And I think a lot of people read between the lines and said, ‘Gee, I think ADM is going to be applying for that money.’”

Perhaps in this new era of American energy we all can take a cue from Archer Daniels Midland. The self-proclaimed “supermarket to the world” has replaced that slogan with a very apt phrase: “resourceful by nature.” □

Pat Guinane is Statehouse bureau chief for The Times of Northwest Indiana. Previously, he was Statehouse bureau chief for Illinois Issues.

DÉJÀ VU

Energy markets have changed since 1976, as have the players and the technologies. But the debates about what to do are familiar

Essay by James Krohe Jr.



Unrest in the Middle East. Skyrocketing oil prices. Pollution from coal-fired power plants. Politicians offering solutions.

Welcome to the great Illinois energy debate — of 1976. President Jimmy Carter was only a few months away from declaring that the U.S. fight for energy independence was the “moral equivalent of war.” It was a war the United States would lose. After three decades of determined and often expensive muddle, another U.S. president, George W. Bush,

was compelled to warn again that “America is addicted to oil, which is often imported from unstable parts of the world.”

Has anything been learned? Does Illinois risk making the same mistakes it did 30 years ago?

Politicians have always been good at promising bright new futures. Gov. Rod Blagojevich described his energy utopia in August in a plan to meet half the state’s energy demand by 2017 with ethanol, biodiesel and other fuels produced in

Illinois. It differs only in detail from plans proposed by former Govs. Dan Walker and James R. Thompson.

The goal of self-sufficiency appealed to people 30 years ago, too. The push to develop “homegrown energy” evolved into millions for research, for purchase incentives and for subsidies to ethanol and other plant-based fuels, solar and wind. This frontier fantasy even imagined Illinois forests and woodlots as a significant source of energy. Yet today locally produced renewables supply less

than 1 percent of Illinois' energy.

Why did homegrown energy go the way of home-cooked meals? Consider solar power. Solar was the future technology that promised endless free and clean energy. To Illinois, then wracked by debates about dirty coal and nuclear power plants so costly it would have been cheaper to burn money to make power, solar seemed like deliverance. The official Illinois Energy Conservation Plan aimed to identify salable technologies and institutionalize solar, making rooftop hot water systems, for example, as familiar a contraption as gas-fired water heaters.

Is that long-forecast sunny energy future about to dawn at last? Not in Stephen Briek's view. "The cost horizon" — meaning the time at which an investment pays back its cost in savings on conventional energy — "continues to advance 75 yards from wherever we are standing," says Briek, who is the Joyce Foundation's environment program manager. Yet the state of Illinois is still boosting solar.

The showpiece of Illinois solar these days is the "world's largest laundromat" in Berwyn, which uses 36 rooftop solar panels to capture the energy of the sun to heat water for the facility's 153 washers. A state grant paid for 50 percent of the cost of the \$150,000 system; the owner figures it saves him enough money in energy costs annually that his share will be paid for in five years, meaning he gets free hot water for the rest of its expected 20-year life span. If this is commercialized solar, it is the taxpayers who are being hung out to dry.

Briek, who has been involved in energy issues for more than 30 years, thinks wind energy is a better bet than solar this time around. "Wind is the more nearly market-ready of the two," he says, "and it looks like a serious alternative to a new generation of coal plants."

When Gov. Blagojevich announced his administration's Sustainable Energy Plan in 2005, he proposed that utilities and other suppliers boost production of renewable energy delivered to Illinois customers to 8 percent by 2012, with 75 percent of that — 3,000 megawatts — to be wind-generated.

The technology of generating electricity from wind has improved by leaps and bounds — perhaps one should say gusts

— in the past three decades. And Illinois has plenty of wind, even on days when governors aren't announcing energy plans. Several parts of downstate have long been known to have "utility grade" winds. (Indeed, McLean County could legitimately advertise itself as Illinois' Windy County.) The very latest wind resource maps suggest that the state could generate 9,000 megawatts of electricity, which is enough to power 2 million homes.

Entrepreneurs have been quick to seize on this potential. More than a dozen wind farms have been built or are being talked about. The lingering questions about wind are no longer technological but economic. The winds in Illinois blow most dependably at night, when power is needed least. Worse, it costs more to produce than power from plants fired by coal, gas or nuclear energy.

"Wind farms" are aptly named, as they make economic sense only because of substantial federal subsidies. Wind farms in effect generate energy by mining taxpayers — the original renewable resource. For every kilowatt generated, the producer gets a credit against his or her federal tax liabilities worth 1.9 cents per kilowatt.

This ill wind blows the way of wealthy investors eager to reduce their taxes. Sadly for them, Congress' commitment is less than whole-hearted. Tax credits have been granted on an annual basis; an investor relying on them is just as foolish as the nation is when it relies on a volatile Middle East for oil. Congress, by refusing to make a long-term commitment to subsidies, left U.S. wind turbine equipment makers unsure whether they would have a future market. The result is that most of the wind turbines being installed in the United States are built by companies based abroad. So much for energy independence.

Congress has been kinder to another of the alternative energies that Illinois has been amply designed by nature to provide: ethanol. Energy crises come and go, but U.S. agriculture has been in a state of more-or-less constant crisis. Ethanol from the start has been a farm-support program masquerading as energy innovation. In 1978, the federal Energy Tax Act was supposed to temporarily exempt biofuels from the excise tax on motor fuels. Since then, the ethanol that was supposed to

rescue the nation's drivers from perfidious oil states has rescued only our corn farmers. Ethanol plants produce the energy equivalent of about 5 billion gallons of gasoline a year. The energy spent by critics trying to kill the program would probably run the U.S. fleet longer. And ethanol offers little, if any, real clean-air benefit.

Illinois lawmakers, nonetheless, continue to boost ethanol as a magic elixir for the nation's energy ills. Illinois politicians dare not speak against it; indeed, they want more of it. In August, candidate Blagojevich called for construction of as many as 20 new ethanol facilities in the state that already produces most of the ethanol made in the United States. When Rich Whitney, Green Party candidate for Illinois governor, earlier this year wondered aloud whether the incumbent governor's enthusiasm for ethanol in August might just reflect the \$50,000 campaign contribution he received from Archer Daniels Midland in May, he asked a question that should be directed at many an Illinois politician.

Ethanol from corn, of course, was described in the 1970s as a bridge technology, necessary only until fuel alcohol could be made economically from such biomass as crop wastes or easy-to-grow grasses. (Four of the new ethanol plants that the governor proposed in August are to use corn husks or other plant waste.)

Some experts — who can expect no invitations to the Executive Mansion any time soon — have been telling people that while "cellulosic ethanol" may yet deliver on its now rather moldy promise, the technology is still as many as 20 years away from commercialization. As Robert Bradley, an astute historian of the issue, has noted about the past 30 years of U.S. energy policy, "the lesson has been learned the hard way that government invariably picks losers, the market picks winners and 'infant industries' requiring government favor have trouble growing up."

Illinois is a state whose electricity sector has already made more progress toward a carbonless future than any other. Nuclear plants, which don't burden the atmosphere with CO₂, account for half of the electricity generated in Illinois (as compared to 22 percent by the nation as a whole). Yet, few today talk about

expanding nuclear plants.

True, nukes had a problematic history in Illinois. Commonwealth Edison had trouble running them, and Illinois Power had trouble building them. The debate, or rather the nondebate, about nukes seems stuck in that past. One of the reasons ComEd never bothered to run its plants very well is that it had scant reason under the old regulated price scheme; deregulation gave the utility reasons to learn how to run its old plants efficiently, and they have become models of their kind.

"Nuclear has been off the table for economic and social reasons for a long time," says Brick of the Joyce Foundation. "Serious people are starting to look at it again."

New kinds of nuclear plants promise to be cheaper to build and safer to run, and such technologies are less pie-in-the-sky than some of the advanced clean-coal technologies that are being championed in Illinois. Such machines are a-building in places like Finland and France, and Britain is seriously considering the technology. Exelon, corporate parent of Commonwealth Edison, plans to build a new plant in Clinton. That would be consistent with the advice of sensible economists who argue that Illinois should maintain a mix of power-generating sources — coal, gas and nuclear — as protection against future disruptions or price hikes in any one fuel source.

Several lessons from the '70s are pertinent to today's policy debates. One is that the future is unknowable. "All the work we did 25 years ago was done in anticipation of a future — growing shortages and thus higher costs for energy — that didn't occur," says Frank Beal, founding director of the old Illinois Institute of Energy and Natural Resources and later the director of the department by that name. "All you can

do is draw up plausible scenarios and draft policies that are robust enough to adapt to a different future than the one you expect."

In the '70s, experts predicted a future of scarce energy resources and permanently high prices, and policy-makers made policies to fit it. Carter in his 1977 national energy address predicted that sometime in the early '80s the world would be demanding more oil than it could produce. (Wrong, or at least not right yet.) He also was confident that the United States would "never again import as much oil as we do now." (Imports began to climb again during the tenure of former President

of coal-fired generating plants in Illinois.

Thirty years ago, coal-fired plants designed to make lots of power as cheaply as possible — which they did admirably — proved to be the wrong kinds of machines for making electricity in a newly environmentally conscious Illinois, where how power was produced mattered as much as its cost. That set off three decades of furious research into ways to burn coal so it would not make coal companies sick.

Perhaps the lushest fruit of those many years of work at such places as the Coal Research Center at Southern Illinois University Carbondale was the perfection of "fluidized bed combustion," a process

to burn even Illinois' sulfurous coal without violating clean air standards. Pilot or field projects using the technology began to be tested in Illinois in the late '70s. By the mid-'80s, several true commercial projects were up and running, and by the early 1990s the technology was, in the words of John Mead, the longtime director of the Coal Research Center, "proven and in wide use across the country."

The availability of such clean-coal technologies solved

the "energy problem" as it was conceived in Illinois in the '80s and '90s — that not enough of the power plants being built to supply it used Illinois coal. The General Assembly made money available to anyone wanting to build one through a \$3.5 billion revenue bond authorization, the largest incentive program of its kind in the nation.

Unfortunately, by the time these coal-burning "technologies of tomorrow" finally got online, they solved yesterday's problem. The then-new environmental standards in the '70s aimed at sulfurous and nitrous emissions and particulates; those now being talked about seek to curb emissions of greenhouse gases, principally CO₂ (carbon dioxide).

Illinois' coal and power generation

Photograph courtesy of the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum



Former President Jimmy Carter, pictured here with his daughter Amy, wore a cardigan sweater that came to symbolize the 1970s energy crisis in the United States.

Ronald Reagan, and today constitute about 60 percent of our supply.) Experts assumed that natural gas would be so scarce that burning it to run power plants would be like running a tractor on champagne. (Natural gas became the fuel of choice for new electric generating facilities; in Illinois, power generation from gas was negligible in the '70s, but today provides some 25 percent of the state's electricity.)

Another great truth to emerge from the '70s is that everything is connected. Energy technologies cannot be considered separately from regulatory policy, which can't be separated from environmental issues. None of this is unaffected by politics. Nothing demonstrates these truths more vividly than the history

industries thus find themselves in 2006 in a situation not very different from the one they faced in 1976, when current coal-burning technology also was revealed to be inadequate to meet a new generation of environmental standards. Those industries again need a technology that burns coal more cleanly than plants currently planned or in use can do.

The obvious candidate is so-called “ultraclean” gasification. This process truly would be the miracle that for decades existed only in the dreams of coal company officials — a way to burn coal with essentially no emissions, period, save for the sighs of relief from coal company stockholders. The CO₂ produced during combustion, for example, can be captured and sold or shipped by pipeline to be injected into wells to push more oil out of old wells (as the governor somewhat quixotically proposed in August). Or it can be “sequestered,” basically entombed underground in — the probable locale in Illinois’ case — abandoned coal mines.

Mead notes that ultraclean coal technologies also are some years from commercial deployment. Which brings us to FutureGen. This is the \$1 billion public-private emissions-free coal-fired CO₂-sequestering 275-megawatt power plant that, it is hoped, will prove the viability of ultraclean coal technology. Its private investors include some of the world’s largest coal companies and electric utilities. That international consortium of coal companies, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy, is charged with scouting locations for the wonder plant. Among the four finalists announced in July by the FutureGen Industrial Alliance are two in Illinois: Mattoon and Tuscola.

But FutureGen will not even start up until 2012, and it will be longer before the kinks are worked out. No one knows what the global energy market will be like in a world that is volatile in economic and climatological terms. Again, the ’70s offer cautionary lessons. The FutureGen of that day was a federally subsidized \$1 billion synthetic fuel or “synfuel” plant authorized by Congress in 1976 to demonstrate how to turn coal into what could be called unnatural gas. Illinois was in the running for that demonstration plant, too, but the winner

was a plant in North Dakota that converted lignite coal into methane. By the time that facility opened in 1984, government price controls on natural gas had been lifted. Natural gas was available at prices lower than that of the plant’s synthesized version. The consortium in charge abandoned the plant as uneconomical in 1985, and the U.S. Department of Energy assumed ownership in 1986.

“Crisis is a stimulant for fundamental system change,” insists Beal. “Global warming *may* be a crisis-level phenomenon of that kind.” But history suggests that Congress will shrink from imposing draconian limits on carbon emissions unless there is a perceived crisis. What happens in the next few summers will determine that. Moderating weather will have the same effect on our good intentions that the breaking of the OPEC embargo had in 1974. Global warming may prove to be a “crisis” that can be solved not by spending a billion bucks on a miracle coal plant but by consumers spending a couple of hundred on more efficient air conditioners.

However, if a future longer than five years is hard for people to imagine, so, apparently, is a past that is longer than that.

One example of this truth is energy efficiency, or what was usually called conservation in the ’70s. That era sparked a spate of federally funded conservation programs aimed at spreading the efficiency gospel through weatherization assistance to homeowners and energy-saving tips for small businesses, schools, hospitals, local governments and public care institutions. The state also compelled energy utilities to offer their customers home energy audits and assistance in purchasing, installing and financing efficiency improvements or such gizmos as solar hot water heaters or greenhouses.

Lower energy costs during the ’90s meant that people who had learned to be careful with nickels became careless with dollars. The average household forgot much of what had been learned about efficiency in the ’70s and perfected in the ’80s. The advocacy group Environment Illinois’ current energy program urges public education, low-cost or free weatherization assistance and distribution of compact fluorescent

light bulbs, low-flow showerheads, pipe wraps, water heater blankets and the like. Excellent ideas — and all tried back then at a cost of millions in a futile attempt to inculcate a new energy ethic.

Of course, the only way to make efficiency stick would have been to build it not into the heads of consumers, but into their houses and the machines they use to run them. Efforts to adopt mandatory efficiency codes for residential buildings and appliances were made in the ’70s and failed. The result is that Illinois is one of only four states in the nation that doesn’t have a statewide energy efficiency code for new home construction.

As for appliances, Environment Illinois calculates that if Illinois were to adopt up-to-date efficiency standards for furnaces and appliances, Illinoisans would save more than \$344 million in energy costs. While sensible, such measures are not popular. Energy utilities avoid them because efficiency cheats them of sales, and municipalities resist them because mandatory codes mean a surrender of sovereignty to Springfield. Homebuilders are hesitant because efficiency means building better products than their market demands.

We have gradually unlearned the lessons from the first great energy crisis — not only how to ease one, but even that energy crises can happen. Senior state agency heads are shoved out the door with each new gubernatorial administration, for example, and with them go whatever wisdom they accumulated during their tenures; lower-level staff have retired and been replaced in many cases by people who were in diapers in 1973. Nor are there many members left in the General Assembly who grappled with Illinois’ energy problems in the ’70s and early ’80s. Not making the same mistakes today that were made then is harder to do when the people making decisions don’t know what the old mistakes were. □

James Krohe Jr. is a veteran commentator on Illinois public policy issues. A frequent contributor to Illinois Issues, his most recent piece “Shape shifter,” was published in September.

IS NUCLEAR ENERGY THE ANSWER?

In an age of global warming, should we take a new look at this controversial energy source?

EMPHATICALLY YES

An environmentalist changes his mind

by Patrick Moore

In my early days as a leader of Greenpeace, I opposed nuclear energy. Thirty years later, environmental challenges have changed, and my views on nuclear energy have changed with them.

We are in a global warming trend. Media stories offer daily reminders of how temperature increases are altering our planet. Insurance companies offer policies to hedge against the effects of climate change.

In case human activity is contributing to the problem, we ought to work to reduce our emissions of CO₂ — the primary greenhouse gas associated with climate change. There is little agreement on how to curb these emissions while powering a prosperous civilization, yet humankind already has a tool.

That tool is nuclear energy.

While energy conservation, together with such renewables as wind, hydro and geothermal (ground source heat pumps) will play a growing role in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions, they alone cannot provide electrical power for a rapidly industrializing world.

Nuclear energy is safe, reliable and cost-effective. Today, 442 reactors in some 30 countries are matching the total global electrical output of 1960. Worldwide, the nuclear energy industry has more than 12,000 reactor-years of experience.

In fact, Illinois is a leader in nuclear energy production. Illinois has more nuclear capacity than any other state, and almost as much as the entire United Kingdom. Eleven reactors generate about half of Illinois' energy, and help avoid the emission of approximately 90 million metric tons of CO₂ each year.

Despite an impressive operational record, one obstacle stands in the way of maximizing this proven source of clean power.

Clearly, the obstacle facing a greater reliance on nuclear energy is not technological feasibility. Nuclear energy has been providing electricity to our planet for decades, and more than 100 reactors provide electricity in the United States alone.

The obstacle is not safety. Nuclear energy is one of the safest industrial sectors worldwide. Modern nuclear power plants follow strict government regulations, which mandate continuous employee training and redundant safety features. By contrast, the Soviet-designed Chernobyl reactor was an accident waiting to happen; it had no containment structure, and its operators literally blew it up. Tragically, the

number of deaths from Chernobyl confirmed by the United Nations is 56. The Three Mile Island meltdown in Pennsylvania, while frightening, was a safety success story. The containment structure functioned as designed and prevented radioactive material from escaping at harmful levels. No deaths or injuries resulted. Moreover, no radiation-related deaths have been attributed to the civilian nuclear reactor program in the United States.

Nor is cost the obstacle. U.S. nuclear reactors deliver electricity at less than 2 cents per kilowatt-hour, which is on par with coal and hydro.



The price of uranium is stable compared to other fuels used to generate electricity. Plus, much less fuel is needed; one uranium pellet produces the same amount of energy as 18,552 cubic feet of natural gas or 1,836 pounds of coal.

Neither is waste proving to be an obstacle. Spent fuel, which contains 95 percent of its original energy, is being safely stored at nuclear power plants around the world, and will be reused by future generations for electricity. Within 40 years, spent fuel has less than one-thousandth the radioactivity it had when it was removed from the reactor. Plus, advances in fuel reprocessing will allow the industry to greatly reduce the amount of material requiring treatment and disposal.

The obstacle is not terrorist attack. Even an airliner would not penetrate the 5-foot-thick reinforced concrete containment structure that protects contents from the outside as well as from the inside.

The obstacle isn't even nuclear weapons proliferation. Nuclear energy development will not lead to more nuclear weapons for a simple reason: Countries no longer need a nuclear reactor to produce the enriched uranium for a nuclear bomb. Enriched uranium can be made by using new centrifuge technology — without a nuclear reactor.

The obstacle facing a greater reliance on nuclear energy is the fervent and emotional opposition to nuclear energy by some activists. These groups use misinformation to scare the public into believing nuclear energy is unsafe.

Some of these activist groups consider themselves to be at the forefront of the fight against global warming. Yet they oppose the only nongreenhouse gas-emitting power source capable of effectively replacing fossil fuels and satisfying growing global demand.

They want fossil fuel power plants phased out, and suggest that conservation, efficiency and renewables alone will provide sufficient power for the world's growing cities and production sectors.

As a result, the American people are at a loss for a realistic solution to climate change, when the answer lies in their own proven nuclear technology.

Not only is nuclear energy the right choice for the environment, it makes



Braidwood Nuclear Power Plant

economic and political sense. If the United States is to remain competitive in a global marketplace, then Americans will need all the energy available to them. Chief among those energy sources is nuclear.

I have joined former New Jersey Gov. and EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman as co-chair of the Clean and Safe Energy Coalition to get the message across. Citizens deserve to make

informed decisions about the future of their nation. They need information, not misinformation. Once people see nuclear energy for what it truly is — safe, reliable power with no greenhouse gas emissions — they'll see the solution to climate change is right in their own back yard. □

Patrick Moore, a co-founder and former leader of Greenpeace, is chair of Greenspirit Strategies Ltd. He co-chairs the Clean and Safe Energy Coalition, www.CleanSafeEnergy.org.

Illinois' nuclear plants

This state had the greatest nuclear capacity among the 31 states that produce nuclear energy, as of January 2005. Illinois has six nuclear plants and 11 reactors. All are owned and operated by Exelon, with the exception of the Clinton plant, which is operated by AmerGen, an Exelon subsidiary. Almost half the electricity generated in Illinois comes from nuclear plants.

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Reactors</u>	<u>Share of state's nuclear production</u>	<u>Net kilowatt hour generation</u>
Braidwood	2	21.7 percent	19,796
Byron	2	21.7 percent	19,120
Clinton	1	8.7 percent	8,692
Dresden	2	13.4 percent	13,622
LaSalle	2	20.6 percent	18,714
Quad Cities	2	13.8 percent	13,319

SOURCE: U.S. Energy Information Administration

ABSOLUTELY NOT

*A medical expert
remains firmly opposed*

by Dr. Helen Caldicott

President George W. Bush categorically stated when visiting the Pennsylvania Limerick Nuclear Power Plant earlier this year: "Nuclear power helps us protect the environment."

While it is unclear where the president obtained his scientific and medical expertise, his actual knowledge leaves much to be desired.

Contrary to industry propaganda, the energy-intensive process used to enrich uranium for nuclear fuel, to construct the reactor and to transport and store the intensely radioactive waste for eons, emits global-warming gases to the atmosphere. A gas-fired plant emits three times more CO₂ (carbon dioxide) than a similar-sized atomic reactor, but as the supply of usable uranium declines, a nuclear plant will generate as much CO₂ as the gas-fired generator. Nuclear power, therefore, contributes substantially to global warming. Meanwhile, if all electricity today were generated with nuclear power, only nine years' supply of usable uranium would be available. It is, therefore, a finite commodity like oil.

Wall Street and Standard & Poor's are extremely reluctant to invest in nuclear power, having been severely burnt in the 1970s and '80s when meltdowns at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl caused the cost of nuclear reactors to soar.

But the 2005 federal energy bill allocated a massive \$13 billion to this inefficient and dangerous industry. A meltdown induced by terrorism or mechanical or human failure would signal the end of nuclear power, and billions of invested dollars would be lost.

David Lochbaum, a nuclear engineer with the Union of Concerned Scientists, is not sanguine when he states, "It is not 'if' but 'when' there is a meltdown" because of lax and inefficient safety procedures overseen by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission at the 103 operating U.S. reactors.

In fact, security virtually has not been tightened at these reactors since 9/11, even though one of the intended targets of the

terrorists that day was the Indian Point reactors' site, which is 35 miles from Manhattan. In such an attack, up to 43,700 people within 50 miles would succumb to acute radiation sickness over two weeks, and as many as 518,000 people would die years later of radiation-induced cancer, according to a study by the Union of Concerned Scientists. The financial capital of the world would be rendered uninhabitable.

Operating nuclear reactors emit dangerous radioactive materials into the air and water every minute. The gases xenon, krypton and argon are continuously released into the air, where they hover at ground level during meteorological inversion systems to be inhaled by the surrounding populations. These fat-soluble gases are readily absorbed through the lung and migrate in the blood to fatty tissues of the abdominal fat pad and upper thighs, where they irradiate the reproductive organs with high doses of mutagenic gamma radiation.

Similarly, radioactive hydrogen, or tritium, is routinely released into air and water, and it also has accidentally leaked into underground water at Indian Point, at the Braidwood, Byron and Dresden reactors outside of Chicago and the Palo Verde reactor in Arizona. Tritium is a potent carcinogen in animal studies and causes congenital defects. Absorbed readily through the skin, it also enters the body through the gut and lung. With a half-life of 12.1 years, it is radioactive for more than 100 years. People living near nuclear power plants are therefore continually at risk.

But more is at stake. Thirty tons of highly carcinogenic nuclear waste is produced yearly in each reactor. Nuclear waste is extremely radioactive and so hot that it must be continually cooled for decades in what are euphemistically called "swimming pools" adjacent to the reactors. A terrorist attack on a swimming pool containing 10 to 30 times more radiation than the reactor could release massive quantities of radiation that would devastate surrounding communities and agricultural areas forever.

Nuclear waste must be isolated from the environment for at least 250,000 years, a physical and scientific impossibility. In many areas in the United States, including Hanford, Wash., Savannah River, S.C., and West Valley, N.Y., radioactive isotopes seep

and leak into the environment, where they concentrate at each step of the food chain. Odorless, tasteless and invisible, they enter the human body and migrate to specific organs where they irradiate and mutate surrounding cells for many years. The incubation time for cancer is long — five to 60 years — hence the delay in exposing the medical dangers of nuclear power.

Over time, however, nuclear waste will induce epidemics of cancer, leukemia and genetic disease in future generations. The medical dictum states, "if a disease is incurable, the only recourse is prevention."

While nuclear power is a transient generator of electricity, its actual legacy is, and will be, medically catastrophic. □

Dr. Helen Caldicott is the author of Nuclear Power Is Not the Answer, which was published in September by The New Press. She is founder and president of the Nuclear Policy Research Institute, www.nuclearpolicy.org, and was a co-founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Illinois electricity sector's carbon dioxide emissions

Of the 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Illinois ranked 6th in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in 2004, the most recent year such figures were available for comparison. Carbon dioxide emissions contribute to global warming.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Metric Tons</u>
1989	55,996,698
1990	59,998,132
1991	61,694,921
1992	58,333,142
1993	69,699,451
1994	72,588,125
1995	73,578,773
1996	81,498,777
1997	87,230,860
1998	87,115,675
1999	86,614,343
2000	93,639,638
2001	92,414,836
2002	95,609,732
2003	94,940,598
2004	100,325,443

SOURCE: U.S. Energy Information Administration

Between the lines

Candidates for governor face the challenge of getting their messages across. But the voters will have to decipher the subtext

by Bethany Carson

Campaigns for November elections traditionally began after Labor Day, but this summer's State Fair set the tone in a long race for governor.

Democrat Day — called Governor's Day in honor of the party in power — was loud, star-studded and packed with folks wearing bright blue T-shirts to show support for incumbent Gov. Rod Blagojevich. Many wore the names of unions as they stepped off 60 charter buses.

The \$20,000 to \$25,000 cost of their transportation from hometowns to fairgrounds was paid by the Blagojevich political fund, according to campaign spokeswoman Sheila Nix.

Once inside the grounds, the crowds danced to *We Are Family* before a banner that read, "Illinois Democrats: Working for Families."

Then Blagojevich, running for his second term, took the stage to tout the ways he had "fundamentally changed" the state's economic and social well-being during his first term — despite inheriting "a state in utter and complete meltdown" from a GOP administration that was "only interested in serving itself."

The next day, Republicans gathered at a smaller, lower-key rally accompanied by

live jazz. Participants, mostly locals, raised red signs to support state Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka for governor, then sang the national anthem.

Topinka's remarks opened with a string of quips about Blagojevich. "Boy, when you have to bus in your supporters because you can't get them here voluntarily, you've got a real problem." She then summarized a series of policy proposals that center on what she calls the "three E's" — education, economy and ethics — and acknowledged that her \$1.5 million campaign purse pales in comparison to Blagojevich's \$12.2 million at the end of June.

"It's not easy running against an incumbent, a guy who's got a lot of money," she told her supporters. "He'll

Photograph by Bethany Carson



Gov. Rod Blagojevich with supporters on Governor's Day at the Illinois State Fair

always have a lot more money than I have. But jeppers, I've never had a lot of money and [have] run for public office. And you know what? I've never lost a race. And I don't intend to lose this one."

The onstage photo opportunity included the six statewide GOP candidates as they interlocked hands through *Simply the Best* and positioned themselves in front of a party banner that read "Leaders We Can Trust."

Creating such vivid campaign images is the candidates' challenge. Seeing beyond those images to character and policy will be the voters' challenge. In November, Illinoisans will have to choose among three candidates for governor: Blagojevich, a Chicago Democrat; Topinka, a Riverside Republican; and Rich Whitney, a Carbondale member of the Green Party. In turn, the candidates face a number of challenges as they try to reach voters.

The early returns underscore some of those difficulties. Voters are ambivalent about whom they like and trust, according to a *Chicago Tribune* poll taken during the first week of September. Out of 600 likely voters, 45 percent said they will vote for Blagojevich. While he led Topinka by

12 percentage points, anything below 50 percent suggests vulnerability for an incumbent. But Topinka didn't pose a strong alternative, according to that poll, pulling only 33 percent support. Voter apathy about these candidates was further highlighted by responses to the *Tribune* poll on the issue of ethics. When asked who they thought could clean up state government, only 29 percent said Blagojevich; 27 percent said Topinka; and 15 percent said they didn't know.

What this suggests is that voters — a mere eight weeks from Election Day — weren't confident about re-electing Blagojevich but lacked enthusiasm for Topinka. Meanwhile, 6 percent of the respondents said they would vote for Whitney.

Prior to the poll, Blagojevich tailored his campaign to highlight his experience. He has served one term as governor, three terms as a U.S. representative and two terms as a state representative. Blagojevich, born on the Northwest Side of Chicago to Serbian immigrant parents, earned a law degree from Pepperdine University Law School in California. He has served as a Cook County assistant state's attorney.

Topinka's campaign has focused on fiscal responsibility, which she says she has honed through almost 12 years as state treasurer, and on the legislative know-how gained during her decade in the state Senate and four years in the Illinois House. Topinka, who grew up in a Cook County suburb, earned a journalism degree from Northwestern University in Evanston. She worked at suburban newspapers before entering politics.

Whitney is a founding member of the Illinois Green Party and is campaigning for "clean energy and clean government." He didn't have a designated day at the State Fair in Springfield. In fact, he wasn't even an official candidate through most of the summer. After securing more than the required 25,000 signatures to get on the November ballot, he chose to campaign at the DuQuoin State Fair in the southern part of the state. A graduate of Southern Illinois University Law School, Whitney is an attorney. He made unsuccessful bids for a seat in Illinois House District 115 in 2002 and 2004, but emphasizes that he earned the legal status of an "established" party in that relatively conservative district.

All three candidates have their work cut out for them as they attempt to package

appeals to a broad enough cross section of this state's diverse political culture.

For his part, Blagojevich secured clutch votes from the blue-collar Metro East region across from St. Louis for his 2002 gubernatorial win, but lost in 63 other counties outside the Chicago metropolitan area. His strongest voter base was and is the heavily Democratic city of Chicago and Cook and DuPage counties, which have been trending Democratic.

Topinka lost both of those high-population Chicago suburban counties to Democrat Tom Dart in her 2002 re-election for treasurer, but she slid to victory with a clear majority of the vote in 95 other counties.

Whitney's strongest showing in his two races for the 115th legislative seat was



Rod Blagojevich

Incumbent

Chicago Democrat, age 49

Prior experience: Governor 2003-present; U.S. representative 1997-2003; state representative 1993-1997.

Web site: www.rodforillinois.com

Sheila Nix, his campaign spokeswoman, answered the following questions in a conversation with Statehouse bureau chief Bethany Carson.

Q. What's your response to reports that say Illinois has a \$3 billion budget deficit when accounting for outstanding bills and Medicaid backlogs?

First of all, I don't think that's right. I think there's always been [a] Medicaid back payment, and that was in place when we took over. We've made some progress. The good news is that the governor's office was just able to release an additional \$500 million to pay down the Medicaid backlog. The economy's getting better, so they had higher than projected

his home base of Jackson County in the southern-most portion of the state. He says he also has gained momentum in the university towns of Bloomington-Normal, Champaign-Urbana and Peoria.

But wherever they live, voters are likely to care more about daily life than about politics, says Chris Mooney, a Springfield-based political scientist with the University of Illinois' Institute of Government and Public Affairs. "That's the job of a leader, to convince the electorate that there's something that ought to be done."

Voters are attuned to policy questions, primarily the quality of their kids' education, affordability and access to health care and the availability of good-paying jobs. But the glue that holds these issues together rests on a candidate's master

revenues. That will reduce the payment cycle to under 60 days.

The next revenue projection looks like that's going to be a little bit higher, too. That money will also go into the Medicaid backlog, and then that gets the payment cycle down to 51 days.

Q. The governor's estimate of how much the state could garner by privatizing the Illinois Lottery has increased from \$10 billion to \$15 billion. Why?

Some of the research that was being done to explore the market has gotten back some higher projections than were originally anticipated. Real potential buyers have been offering closer to \$15 billion.

Q. What makes Gov. Rod Blagojevich's energy plan more realistic for the state than proposals by the other candidates?

Gov. Blagojevich started doing some investments in ethanol and biodiesel fuels. In terms of having a lot of experience and putting a lot of thought into it based on what they've already seen, [his administration has] the level of knowledge and understanding of the market to be able to put forth a plan that will be successful. □

budget plan. And that is complicated to read because so much of what the candidate says — estimates of spending, estimates of revenues — must be taken on some measure of faith. Voters have to trust the candidate who stands behind the numbers more than the numbers themselves.

The candidates' stances on taxes are almost always crystal clear, though, whether or not the numbers add up. Blagojevich has pledged not to raise the state income or sales taxes to generate additional revenue. Topinka says a tax hike would be a last resort, but she wouldn't rule it out. Both have looked to gaming for extra cash, something Whitney says he adamantly opposes as he campaigns for tax reform.

Education spending often dominates voters' concerns, and for good reason. With nearly 900 school districts, Illinois has one of the largest student achievement gaps between wealthy and poor school districts. But finding ways to improve education leads, inexorably, to the politically tricky question of school funding.

Blagojevich's education platform this time out rests on his first-term accomplishments. He says he inherited a \$5 billion budget deficit from previous Republican administrations. Nevertheless, he has managed to dedicate \$3.8 billion in new funding to elementary and secondary education without increasing state income or sales taxes. And that has helped to raise the minimum per pupil spending to \$5,334. Critics note that's still short — by some \$1,000 per pupil — of the amount recommended in the Education Funding Advisory Board's 2005 report to the General Assembly.

Blagojevich frames all of his education initiatives as relief for moderate-income families. For instance, he has enacted state subsidized preschool for up to 10,000 3- and 4-year-old students considered at-risk financially or educationally. And now college students from families who make less than \$200,000 can apply for \$500 grants from the state to cover tuition.

In the campaign, Blagojevich proposed raising \$10 billion for elementary and secondary education by selling or leasing the Illinois Lottery to investors. But in September, he upped the estimated

value. "Real potential buyers have been offering closer to \$15 billion," says Nix, his campaign spokeswoman.

In fact, privatization is at the heart of the governor's strategy to generate revenue for a number of programs. But skepticism about the governor's fiscal projections has been an unwelcome theme throughout the Blagojevich Administration. It stymied his proposed school construction program during the spring legislative session, for instance. The bonding program would have cleared a three-year waiting list of 24 schools that need



Judy Baar Topinka

*Three-term state treasurer
Riverside Republican, age 62
Prior experience: Treasurer 1995-
present; state senator 1985-1995; state
representative 1981-1985.*

*Web site: www.judyforgov.com
She answered the following
questions in a phone conversation with
Statehouse bureau chief Bethany Carson.*

Q. What are some specific examples of how you would scale back Medicaid costs?

We want to look at Medicaid in the hopes of getting onto a managed care [system]. We would be establishing a Medicaid reform task force. That would be on Day 1, so as to slow the growth. I want to be real clear that my proposal does not cut off people who are currently on [Medicaid]. If they're eligible now, they will be eligible under my plan.

We're going to pursue a federal block grant for Medicaid so we don't have this one-size-fits-all situation that exists.

We would utilize the state's 10th casino license that has lain dormant for a decade. This is basically [Chicago Mayor Richard Daley's] proposal without city ownership. That would generate a one-time revenue

state dollars to build new facilities. The measure failed when Republicans refused to vote for a budget or a construction program that relied on what they call unreliable one-time revenue sources.

"Excuses," says Rebecca Rausch, Blagojevich spokeswoman. "It's a smoke screen, and it's actually a pretty poor excuse not to vote for school construction."

Meanwhile, the governor continues to visit schools and universities throughout the state, noting they could get construction money if Republicans would

of \$650 million for the sale of the license, and about \$600 million per year. That would pay off all our old Medicaid bills.

Q. What do you say to the skeptics who think you've overestimated what you can do with revenue gained by your Chicago casino proposal?

I think we've seen the legislature come close to passing a 10th license, about twice. They've been egged on by the governor, but as they've gotten close, he cut them off at the knees and tried to make them look bad. They are not going to throw that ball to a receiver who is going to horse around with them. They know I would be a willing receiver. I think we can work it out.

I don't think I'm overestimating. I think I can make it happen.

Q. How would tightening guidelines for Medicaid eligibility impact All Kids?

I think it would make it easier because right now we see people who are trying to get into All Kids being rejected by Medicaid providers because [providers'] bills haven't been paid. They're not going to take anybody new on when they can't get paid for those that they've already provided for. Now, if you make \$100,000 a year, I don't think this state should be paying for your child. At that point, you should be picking up your own children's health care. □

cooperate. One such visit to deep southern Illinois in late August led him to promise \$1.9 million for the renovation of the dilapidated Carterville High School. Unable to promise money from a capital program, the administration will have to tap a different pot of state money called Build Illinois.

"Some of these buildings around the state need some maintenance and can't wait for politicians in Springfield to vote for a capital bill," Rausch says.

Topinka casts her plan for education and school construction as an alternative. While Blagojevich wants to sell a state asset, she wants to create a state asset: a land-based casino in Chicago. She also would allow the nine other Illinois riverboats to more than double the limit on their gaming positions.

She estimates the gaming plan could generate one-time revenues of \$650 million and a continuing \$600 million per year. She also proposed \$3 billion for school construction projects.

She, too, faces skeptics who say her plan is too optimistic about how far she could stretch the casino revenue. Some question the logistical problem of trying to replace the legally challenged 10th casino license with a new one for a Chicago venue.

But Mooney says, if marketed correctly, Topinka's proposal for a Chicago casino could resonate with voters who would typically feel nervous about relying on gaming for education funding. "The Park Ridge soccer mom is going to be a little nervous about that because it's something unseemly. But if you put that out as an alternative to a tax hike — where our culture is not one that looks out for the common good as much as the individual good — it might be seen as a lesser of two evils."

And it doesn't hurt that Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, a Democrat, hasn't opposed her plan. He has pushed for a city-owned casino before, but a privately



Former Gov. Jim Edgar (at podium) introduces GOP candidate Judy Baar Topinka.

owned casino could still benefit his city.

Whitney's education plan separates him from the others in that he looks to tax reform, not gaming revenue, as a way to increase school spending. He says the current system relies too heavily on property taxes — read local property wealth — and contributes to the disparity in spending from one school district to another.

He supports legislation that has been stalled in the legislature since 2005. It would increase the individual income tax rate from 3 percent to 5 percent and the corporate rate from 4.8 percent to 8 percent.

those surveyed said they favored the idea of school funding reform to reduce reliance on property taxes, which would mean increasing the state income and/or sales taxes.

Health care concerns among voters center on affordability of insurance and access to doctors of choice. The candidates, meanwhile, share another, broader concern about how the state can pay for the medical care of those who cannot afford insurance.

Blagojevich expanded eligibility for Medicaid, the state and federal health insurance for the poor and disabled. And he toured Illinois this summer to promote his All Kids health insurance program designed to connect children to a managed care system he estimates could save the state \$57 million. So far, about 75,000 children have been newly enrolled, says Amy Rosenband, spokeswoman for the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services. That's well on the way to reaching the goal of 95,000 by June 2007.

Though he received national attention for the program, Blagojevich must calm medical providers who are keeping tabs on the state's \$1.3 billion backlog in reimbursements to doctors, hospitals and nursing homes that care for Medicaid-eligible patients. Blagojevich's administration promises doctors caring for All Kids patients will get reimbursed within 30 days.

Topinka says the state needs to tame

Photograph by Bethany Carson



Susan Caponigro of Springfield campaigns for Topinka on GOP Day at the State Fair.

Medicaid costs before they eat the entire budget. She proposes capping income eligibility for future All Kids patients. "People who make \$100,000 a year should not be on that program," she says. But, she adds, "No one is being kicked off Medicaid. If they're eligible now, they will still be eligible under my plan."

She would require more identification and six-month follow-ups to ensure people have not exceeded eligibility guidelines. "It's fair to make sure that the people who are on Medicaid are the people who truly need it," she says, "because I don't want to dilute whatever funds we have for people who don't need it."

Whitney supports a form of universal health care in which the state would offer one health insurance plan for all residents. It would be publicly funded with tax dollars. He believes the required tax increase would be smaller than the savings realized by families, businesses and the government.

Job worries also bedevil voters, who must be convinced the next governor can offer solutions to trends that are sending manufacturing jobs overseas and threatening the nation's energy security. And all three candidates tied parts of their economic plans to alternative energy sources that use Illinois' natural resources.

On State Fair Agriculture Day, Blagojevich announced he's releasing \$25 million in grants to help build ethanol and biodiesel plants. A week later, he announced a \$1.2 billion "energy independence" plan. His goal is to meet half the state's energy needs with renewable fuels made from Illinois corn, soybeans and coal by 2017. The plan would increase the number of gas stations that offer E85 and provide incentives for automakers to produce energy-efficient cars. He also would invest in 10 coal gasification plants to make cleaner-burning coal — though those plants would be contingent on legislative support for the capitol bill.

Topinka also released her energy plan at the State Fair. It would create an Illinois Rural Economic Development Authority with \$500 million in bonding authority to assist farmers in producing renewable fuels, including wind energy. It also would require all gas sold in Illinois to contain ethanol and require all state buildings to be more energy-efficient.

Whitney dubs his economic plan the

"New Deal." While he says his ideas for sustainable energy and cleaner transportation are not new, he paints his opponents' plans as too narrow and tailored to corporate interests. He considers his plan broader and more balanced, with the jury still out on whether ethanol could be the primary solution. "When it comes to energy, we shouldn't be putting all of our eggs in one basket," he says.

Instead, Whitney supports incentives and mandates so companies will produce more wind, solar, geothermal and biomass energy. He also says more emphasis on mass transit, such as train travel, could create more job opportunities than



Rich Whitney

Attorney

Carbondale Green, age 51

Prior experience: Unsuccessful run for a seat in Illinois House District 115 in 2002 and 2004.

Web site: www.whitneyforgov.org

He answered the following questions in a phone conversation with State-house bureau chief Bethany Carson.

Q. What makes your energy plan more realistic for the state?

Mine is broader. When it comes to energy, we shouldn't be putting all of our eggs in one basket. There's this whole debate about whether or not it actually takes more energy to create each gallon of ethanol. To me, this indicates that we need to be cautious.

There is no one magic bullet that's going to solve all of our energy problems. It has to be a multiphased approach looking at a lot of different clean energy options, as well as energy efficiency, sustainable transportation and smart urban design. All of these things have to be done to get us out of the fix that we're in today.

I do believe ethanol is a part of the

shoveling more money into state highways.

Candidates' strategies to overcome their negatives and boost their positives rest on efforts to monitor public perception and raise money.

Blagojevich did not get two of his former significant endorsements. The Illinois Education Association and AFSCME Council 31 did not endorse any candidate for governor. Previous campaign donors are such unions as the Illinois Federation of Teachers, the Laborers' International Union, the Service Employees International Union and the Illinois AFL-CIO.

answer, but only a part. We need to take a little more cautious approach and have a little more balanced portfolio on where we're going with clean energy.

Q. What makes you confident a so-called tax swap — income for property — for education funding could gain legislative approval?

Because it does enjoy such broad-based support among the people, that's obviously the tool we would have to use to convince the legislature that they need to do the right thing. We're not starting from zero here. We have a base of support already.

One of the reasons it has not passed is because that base of support within the Democratic Party has not had the support of their own governor. Just having a governor who gets elected and is actually going to be an advocate of this, I think that's going to make a huge difference and make many legislators feel safe that they can go ahead and support this very common-sense plan that is badly needed in Illinois.

Then the next step is to go back to the people, the education lobbies, the citizens groups, that have been fighting for this for years, and say, "Look, you have a governor who's in your corner now. You need to go back and do your part and put pressure on the individual legislators who are bottling this up." □

"Front-line services in every key department have been eroded under the Blagojevich Administration," says Anders Lindall, AFSCME spokesman. "The need to adequately fund public employee pensions, to fairly and fully fund public education, these are all challenges that the state must meet."

But Blagojevich's biggest challenge could be his credibility, says Mooney. "He's just not trusted by the people he works with. He's not trusted by the journalists. That's not just because he says one thing and does another. The words coming out of his mouth, you can't verify. They don't mean anything in the future."

The spring legislative session was an indication of lawmakers' distrust. Democrats made him sign memos that their district projects would get the dollars the governor was promising.

Worse, Blagojevich's administration is knee deep in legal mud, as federal investigators probe alleged political favoritism and fraud in state hires and contracts. And he himself has been interviewed by the FBI.

Yet the governor's campaign juggernaut could roll past these problems if the investigations find no wrongdoing on his part — and Topinka fails to gain traction.

Blagojevich's campaign records show he started the year with \$15.5 million, spent millions of dollars on advertising by midyear and still had \$12.2 million available to spend as of June 30.

Topinka's much smaller campaign purse of \$1.5 million could partially explain her post-Labor Day start in advertising. Her midyear campaign records show she spent little on ads in the first half of the year.

"We have said that we will advertise at the appropriate time," says her campaign spokesman, John McGovern. "We're looking to do that at a point when we believe voters are paying attention and are engaged in the election."

Mooney says the delayed response to Blagojevich's spring slogans, "What's she thinking?" put her at an early disadvantage.



Rich Whitney, in Normal's town square, has gained support in college towns.

Without a coherent message that counters Blagojevich's allegations that she doesn't understand the state's needs, Mooney says voters could question Topinka's credibility. "Not in the sense that you don't believe what she says, but moving up to the ability [and] gravitas to be a governor."

The slower start to getting her message out also has had an impact on her campaign purse. "A late start and lack of experience and skill in her team has hurt her fundraising," says Kent Redfield, Mooney's colleague at the University of Illinois at Springfield and director of the Sunshine Project, which researches campaign finance.

"The fact that she did not raise a lot for the primary and had modest numbers as of June 30 makes contributors hedge their bets," he says. "You do not want to back a loser or have to deal with a governor you did not support."

Previously, her major campaign supporters included the Illinois Hospital Association, the Illinois Association of Realtors and the Illinois State Medical Society. This year she added such business groups as the Illinois Chamber of Commerce.

Mooney says waiting to spend every penny she has until she knows the outcome of the federal investigation into Blagojevich's administration also could turn into an advantage. "It almost doesn't matter what she does with her campaign if the [U.S.] attorney comes out with some high-level indictments," he says.

Whitney acknowledges he has much less money to spread his message. His campaign records show he had only \$860 on June 30.

"I'd be the first to admit that it looks pathetic," he says, adding that much of his funding went through the state Green Party. He also wasn't an official gubernatorial candidate until August 31, giving him little time to play campaign catch-up with his opponents and their multimillion-dollar kitties.

"We've been at such a terrible disadvantage in getting our message out," he says. His Green Party

slate must educate voters who only know the party by stereotype, as tree huggers or environmental guerrillas.

But he adds fundraising and media attention are on the upswing because he's no longer preoccupied with petitioning and gathering 39,000 signatures to get on the ballot. He predicts his numbers in the polls will rise when people get to know him, but that will be a challenge considering his lack of campaign cash and an invitation to only one of the gubernatorial debates.

As of mid-September, he had yet to be invited to this month's two scheduled debates, one October 2 in Decatur on the Illinois Radio Network and one October 26 on the public WTTW Channel 11 in Chicago.

"Now you've got to be polling at a certain number right away, when a lot of media hasn't covered us," he says. "I think that's manifestly unfair."

He says the political system fails to serve the public interest. "The voters of this state deserve to hear all points of view, and that's what the debates should be about. They should be about having the best-informed electorate, and not what's going to make the best show for the ratings."

From now to November 7, candidates will work day and night to convince voters they should be elected. Their success hinges on whether those who turn out on Election Day hear their messages and, more important, believe the promises they make. □

Partisan playbook

The political parties are playing offense and defense in three Illinois congressional districts

by Aaron Chambers

Someone with a decent arm could stand in Springfield and throw a ball from one of the city's congressional districts over another district and into a third. That's because the 17th District, flanked by the 18th on the north and the 19th on the south, gets as narrow as the width of a road when it snakes through the more affluent neighborhoods on Springfield's west side. Once on the city's east side, with its poor and working-class neighborhoods, the district flares back out. This is a shape designed to bypass likely Republicans and capture likely Democrats.

The 17th was drawn to re-elect U.S. Rep. Lane Evans, a Democrat. Just like the rest of the state's congressional districts, it was crafted in a bipartisan deal among congressional leaders to favor the incumbent's party.

Both candidates running to succeed Evans say the district continues, on paper, to lean Democratic. But a district's partisan predisposition won't necessarily determine the outcome of a race for Congress in the November 7 general election. Other factors also matter, including the character and positions of the candidates, and national and state political trends.

An open seat is a factor, too. Two of the three hottest congressional races in Illinois are in districts where no incumbent is seeking re-election. In the third race, the incumbent is just completing her first two-year term. The district is, in short, one step removed from open.

"An open seat is a world different than running against an incumbent," says Andrea Zinga, 57, a former television reporter who is the Republican candidate

for Congress in the 17th. "What we see is a district that leans Democrat, but there is a large swing and independent vote here."

Evans, a popular former Marine from Rock Island, is retiring from Congress after 12 terms and years of fighting Parkinson's disease. He anointed Phil Hare, an aide for more than 23 years, to succeed him in the western Illinois district. Hare, 57, may be the closest thing to an incumbent, but he's not Lane Evans.

"I do think it looks Democratic on paper," Hare says of the district. "But I run every single day like I'm behind. And until they count them up, I am behind. I don't take anything for granted."

He says he doesn't mind the travel. He can get just about anywhere in the district in four hours.

The west suburban 6th District has the other open seat. U.S. Rep. Henry Hyde of Wood Dale, a GOP stalwart who represented the district in Congress for more than 30 years, announced his retirement last spring at the age of 81.

The area has long been viewed as solidly Republican and, indeed, the district was shaped to protect the Republican incumbent. It includes such suburbs as Wheaton and Elmhurst. But the candidacy of tenacious Army veteran Tammy Duckworth, coupled with an effort by national Democratic leaders to spotlight her candidacy, makes the race in the 6th anything but predetermined.

State Sen. Peter Roskam, the 45-year-old Republican candidate, has resorted to criticizing his opponent for failing to publicly debate him — a posture traditionally assumed by the underdog. Roskam's

campaign says Duckworth "ducked" at least seven debates.

"I have a high view of this process," Roskam says. "The House of Representatives is the institution of the federal government that is closest to the people. The way this works is you get to interact with your member of Congress. My sense is if she's afraid to debate me in the district, heaven help her when she steps onto the House of Representatives' floor in Washington, D.C."

Duckworth says she did agree to four debates. However, she says Roskam wanted dozens of debates in random places, including one in a hall accessible only by spiral staircase. When pressed, she says she was not implying her opponent tried to preclude her from attending a debate. Duckworth, 38, is an Army helicopter pilot who lost both legs in a grenade attack in Iraq. She continues to serve as a major in the Illinois Army National Guard.

She's focusing on forums she calls coffees. She goes to constituents' homes, where she encourages them to invite their friends for a talk about their priorities. She says she's up to three or four coffees during the week, plus another one or two on the weekends.

"They're curious about who I am," she says. "They come and they listen to me and they ask the tough questions. Most of them go away saying, 'All right, I'm going to vote for you. I want to hold a coffee of my own and invite all my neighbors. And will you come and talk to them?'" These coffees perpetuate themselves."

Roskam says he, too, is regularly

meeting constituents in their homes. But he suggests his meet-and-greets are more authentic than those organized by Duckworth because, he says, her campaign inflates turnout by pressuring folks to attend. "They're very much trying to drive people to these things," he says. "That's opposed to us saying, 'Will you host Peter Roskam?' and they invite 40 of their friends in."

While the GOP fights to keep the 6th District seat, it covets the seat in the 8th. The northwest suburban 8th also was drawn for a Republican incumbent, and the GOP wants it back.

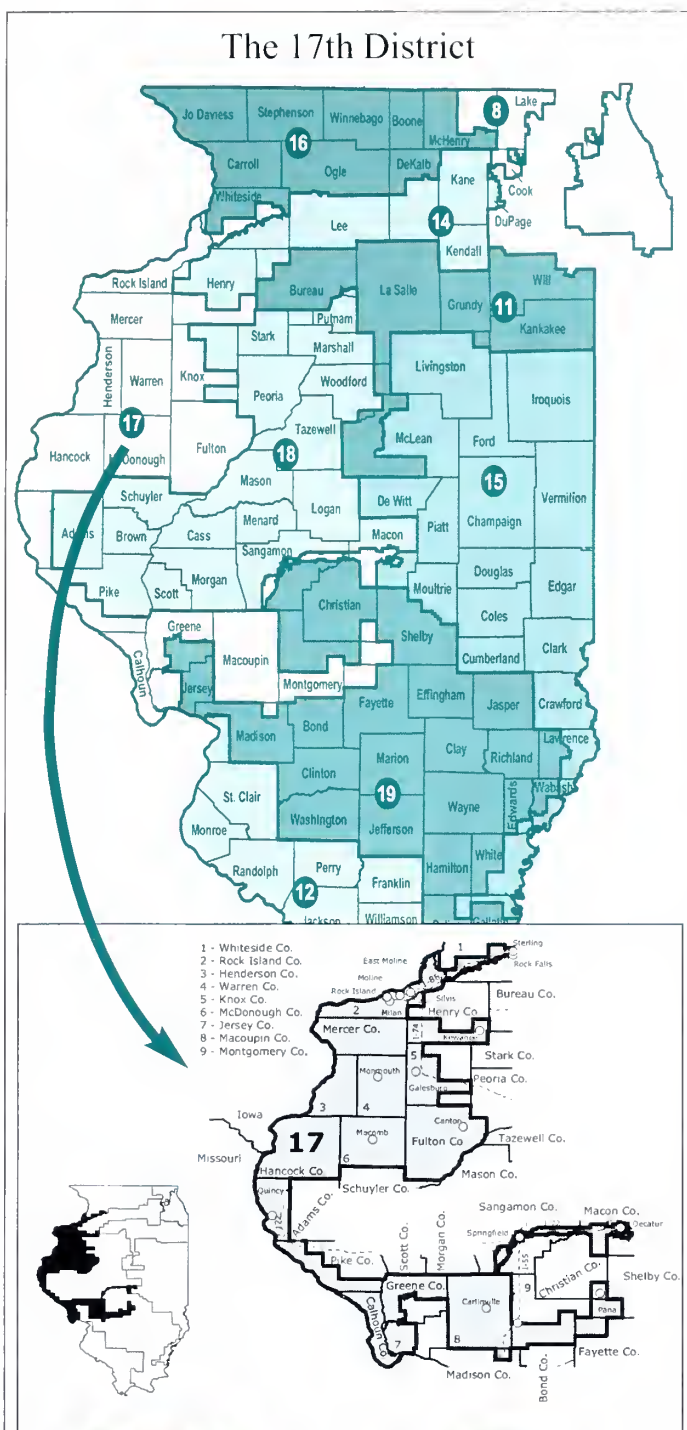
Two years ago, Democrat Melissa Bean, 44, of Barrington won the seat from Republican Phil Crane. Republicans later complained that Crane, who spent 35 years in Congress, had lost touch with his district and that he ran a poor campaign.

"The district has been consistently Republican over a number of years," says David McSweeney, the Republican candidate running against Bean. "Unfortunately, Phil didn't run a very good campaign last time around. His organization withered, and also he wasn't very active in the district."

McSweeney's campaign is quick to note an observation made by syndicated conservative columnist Bob Novak. In late August, Novak wrote in the *Evans-Novak Political Report* that Bean's seat is the only Democrat-held seat in the country that appears "truly vulnerable for takeover." He said Crane lost the GOP-leaning district — "not that Bean really won it" — and that voters would make a "correction" in November.

McSweeney, 41, ran unsuccessfully against Crane in 1998. "This is the one chance to win the seat back — the first [election] time around for an incumbent," he says.

Bean casts McSweeney as an extremist whose social views are



DEMOCRAT
Phil Hare
Aide to U.S. Rep.
Lane Evans
of Rock Island
Age 57



REPUBLICAN
Andrea Zinga
Former TV news
reporter
of Coal Valley
Age 57

too conservative for suburban families. He accuses her of voting in the style of U.S. Sen. John Kerry, the Massachusetts Democrat who failed to unseat President George W. Bush in 2004. "Melissa Bean says one thing and does another thing," he says. "Look at her voting record over and over where she'll vote for final passage of a couple of Republican bills like the Patriot Act and immigration reform, but she'll vote to kill them a few minutes before that," he says. "It's the old John Kerry — 'I voted for it before I voted against it.'"

Bean responds, "Clearly my opponent doesn't understand the rules of Congress or the difference between procedural and substantive votes."

The outcome of these Illinois races could help determine whether the GOP retains its majority in the U.S. House. The Democrats must gain 15 seats nationwide to take control of the chamber. They're banking on voter antipathy toward President Bush, his administration's war in Iraq and the sluggish economic recovery to sweep them in.

Charlie Cook, a nonpartisan analyst and founder of the *Cook Political Report*, told the *Chicago Tribune*, "The Republicans had a great run for a while, and it's over."

Spin to the contrary, Republicans are playing defense. John McGovern, campaign spokesman of U.S. House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert, a Plano Republican, calls Illinois "an important battleground in our efforts to maintain a Republican House majority."

"We're prepared to play offense in this election, and both the 8th and 17th districts provide us with two of our best opportunities to pick up Democrat seats," he says.

Candidates for Congress from Illinois must navigate two

competing trends. Nationally, Republicans must reconcile displeasure with the GOP president. In Illinois, Democrats must deal with the stubborn unpopularity of Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich — particularly downstate, where Blagojevich's support has long trailed that in Chicago, his hometown.

Just as Democrats nationally are trying to exploit Bush-related vulnerabilities among the GOP, Republicans in Illinois are working to link downstate Democrats with Blagojevich. As Republicans move to disassociate themselves from Bush, Illinois Democrats try to unhitch themselves from Blagojevich.

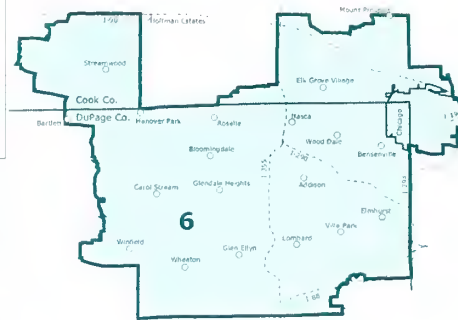
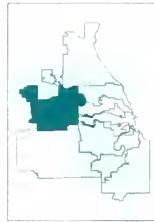
Hare, the Democratic candidate in the 17th, says he's not preoccupied with the prospect of Democrats staying home on Election Day due to Blagojevich's unpopularity. However, he says a particularly negative race between Blagojevich and state Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka, the Republican candidate for governor, could discourage voters generally.

"What I think will depress voter turnout is if we don't get voters excited and talk about the things that are on their minds," Hare says. "I expect that race [for governor] to be very, very negative on both sides. And I think that has a tendency sometimes to depress turnout, but I certainly hope not. There's a lot riding here and for people to stay home would not be a good thing."

On the other hand, John Gianulis is so confident Hare will win that he promised to fit a reporter's head with a classic Italian fedora if Republican Zinga wins in the 17th. Gianulis, Rock Island County's Democratic chairman, also is president of the Illinois Democratic County Chairmen's Association. "If this district doesn't go Democrat for a candidate for Congress, I'll buy you a new Borsalino hat the day after the election," Gianulis says. "I know politics."

The 17th stretches along the Mississippi River from the Quad Cities through Quincy to just shy of the Metro East region, then back northeast through Carlinville and Springfield to Decatur. It's shaped like a "C" that ballooned along the top-left edge.

The 6th District



DEMOCRAT
Tammy Duckworth
National Guard major,
helicopter pilot
of Hoffman Estates
Age 38



REPUBLICAN
Peter Roskam
State senator
of Wheaton
Age 45

It resembles a serpent.

Gianulis says Democrats drew the 17th precisely so they could win. "It's a configuration that looks like hell, but it helps the Democratic Party."

Chris Mooney, a political studies professor at the University of Illinois at Springfield, calls the 17th the "worst example of incumbency-protection gerrymandering in the country." He says he often shows a map of the district to colleagues throughout the nation, and they're universally appalled.

"Every time I run across somebody that's involved in this, they're just like 'Oh my God!' They can't believe it," he says. "They're using it as an example in various political science courses."

Mooney tends to agree that Hare will win by virtue of the district's makeup, and because he believes Zinga is relatively conservative for the district. "He's got a chance of losing, but it's a very, very small one," Mooney says of Hare.

This is Zinga's second run for the seat. She ran unsuccessfully two years ago against Evans. This time around, she argues that voter appetite for a fresh face will

trump the district's partisan predisposition. "We've heard so much about the corruption in Washington," she says. "And we've seen some of that in our own state. Some things aren't being done right and properly in this district. All of that said, I think it bodes very well."

Zinga says she'll win if she can disseminate her message throughout the awkward district. That will be no easy task — either spreading the word or getting it to stick in various reaches of the district. But she says similarities among voters outweigh disparities: Everybody wants a job and adequate health care.

Hare says he, too, would fight to protect jobs. His campaign theme, like Zinga's, is economic development.

"I think we've done a pretty darn good job of going out and talking to people about what we want to do, and not just making it a referendum on George Bush — because that would be a slam dunk," he says. "But that's not the

case with people. And when they go in to vote, he's not up this time and he's not going to be up next time."

Still, Democrats nationally are working to connect Republican congressional candidates to national concerns. U.S. Rep. Rahm Emanuel of Chicago, an energetic former aide to Democratic President Bill Clinton who heads the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, is determined to return the U.S. House to Democratic control.

In late August, Emanuel published his answer to former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich's *Contract with America*. That small-government manifesto helped Gingrich and his fellow Republicans win the U.S. House in 1994. Emanuel's book, *The Plan: Big Ideas for America*, suggests a new "social contract" supportive of universal health care for children and private retirement accounts.

Paul Green, a political science professor at Roosevelt University in Chicago, believes the strategy could help the Democrats win the 15 seats they need for a majority. "The idea is that all politics is local, but if you can nationalize the

congressional races because incumbents win most of the time, then it's really irrelevant who's running," he says.

"It's a question of changing the course of America and creating an enemy — instead of [Bill] Clinton, now it's Bush. If they're successful, they will put a lot of these congressional districts that are swing or moderate in play."

Duckworth, whose campaign has enjoyed extraordinary national exposure, says she is leaving discussion of "the national geopolitics thing" to pundits.

"I am really focusing all of my energy," she says, "on talking to the voters of this district and just sending out the message that I'm someone who's going to stand up for change and who's going to work with both sides [of the aisle]."

Roskam responds: "My opponent is a candidate who has raised 97 percent of her support from outside the 6th Congressional District. She's literally been on a plane flown to [U.S. House Democratic Leader]

Nancy Pelosi's district, where she raised money. She's been to New York with [U.S. Sen.] Hillary Clinton, who hosted her and raised money. The idea that my opponent isn't trying to run a national campaign is, I think, a little bit silly."

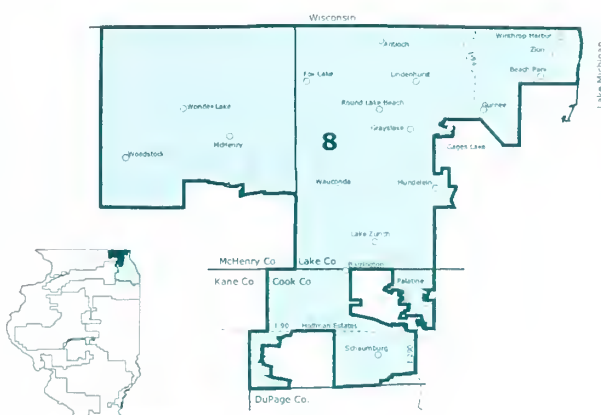
Roskam also has attracted national interest in his campaign. First Lady Laura Bush, among other dignitaries, helped him raise money. "There's a local dynamic at play that, I think, is stronger than the national dynamic," he says. "But, by the same token, you're always operating within a context. Clearly, Illinois 6th is a seat that you want to keep in the win column."


This race, far more than the other two, has been underscored by finger-pointing between the candidates. The rhetoric is harsh, even negative.

Duckworth has made much of her military experience, prominently featuring photos of her uniformed self in campaign material. She says she's just stating the facts — that she is a veteran who can speak with authority on issues of war, and that she understands the nation's homeland security needs.


She calls it a skill set, just like her ability

The 8th District





DEMOCRAT
Melissa Bean
Incumbent
U.S. representative
of Barrington
Age 44



REPUBLICAN
David McSweeney
Investment banker
of Barrington Hills
Age 41

to speak multiple languages. "If Peter Roskam wanted to stand up and push his skills as a personal injury lawyer, then that's a fact," she says. "That's what he is."

Roskam is by trade a personal injury attorney. But as a state lawmaker, he joined his Republican colleagues in supporting legislation to restrict jury awards in lawsuits such as those he files on behalf of injured plaintiffs. He is continuing that theme as a candidate for Congress.

"I've been willing to put my own self-interest aside and vote in favor of changes when I thought there needed to be changes," he says. "I always thought we wanted policymakers who voted against their own financial interests. I think my opponent, by contrast, is being funded by [trial lawyers] who are in favor of the status quo."

Bean, the 8th District incumbent, has worked during her first term to craft a moderate image. She voted for a Central American free trade deal, for instance, that cost her support from organized labor but won her an endorsement from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The business group typically supports Republican candidates, not Democrats. It's expected to spend more than \$400,000 on television advertisements to promote Bean's re-election bid. She has eluded GOP attempts to pigeonhole her.

She says her positions should come as a surprise to no one. "I ran as, and I am, a fiscal conservative and a social moderate," she says. "That makes me, just by my nature, very representative of this district."

The Republicans hope to keep the west suburban 6th, while winning back the northwest suburban 8th and perhaps even taking the western Illinois 17th. The Democrats hope to hold onto the 8th and the 17th, while capturing the 6th.

Bean is a face of that Emanuel-led nationwide campaign. But she joins Duckworth in brushing aside the notion that her campaign is at the core of a national effort by Democrats to win control of the U.S. House.

She suggests she's too busy considering the interests of her constituents to think much about that.

"Certainly the winds are blowing for the Democrats on a national basis," she says. "But I really think that in this district, there's a lot of independence and ticket splitters. These are people who are proud of not voting along partisan lines, but instead voting for who they think is going to represent them on the issues they care about."

Her opponent also is trying to position himself as independent in the eyes of voters. McSweeney calls himself "an independent conservative" and identifies former U.S. Sen. Peter Fitzgerald, the Republican from Inverness who bucked GOP leaders and fought for the appointment of maverick Patrick Fitzgerald as U.S. attorney for northern Illinois, as an early supporter. The two Fitzgeralds are not related.

"It's a good year," he says, "to be running against an incumbent." □

Aaron Chambers is Statehouse bureau chief for the Rockford Register Star. Previously he was Statehouse chief for Illinois Issues.

Where's breakfast?

Other states have Illinois beat when it comes to providing students with meals to start the day

by Maura Kelly Lannan

One of the first things state Rep. Roger Eddy, a Republican from Hutsonville, did when he became superintendent of Hutsonville Community Unit School District 1 was to hop aboard a school bus.

As he sat with students on a morning route through the Crawford County district, Eddy realized that many of them were hungry. "They'd get on and go right to sleep. I began to ask some of them, 'Did you have breakfast this morning?' And they hadn't."

Soon after, Eddy started a school breakfast program in the rural, east central Illinois district. Now, about nine years later, more than 100 of approximately 400 District 1 students eat such items as eggs, cereal and juice at school before classes start. About 90 percent of those students qualify for free or reduced-price meals through the School Breakfast Program, which is administered by the state. The federal government funds, but does not mandate, the program, which began as a pilot in 1966 and was made permanent in 1975.

"Morning is a tremendously important time for kids. It can be the time they're most alert," Eddy says. "Many education people say it can be the best learning time, but not if they're not fed."

Despite this, Illinois ranks near the bottom of the states in feeding low-income students through the federal School Breakfast Program. Researchers came to that conclusion by comparing the number of low-income students who

participate in the breakfast program with those in each state who use the National School Lunch Program, which has the same eligibility requirements. Eligibility for free or reduced-price meals is based on income guidelines, and eligible students must apply. Schools are reimbursed various amounts depending on the severity of need among students and whether meals are free, reduced-price or paid for by students.

During the 2004-2005 school year, only 28.4 percent of low-income Illinois students who used the 60-year-old National School Lunch Program also participated in the School Breakfast Program, according to a survey of states taken by the Food Research and Action Center, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit that fights hunger. Nationwide, for every 43.9 students who took part in the program in the 2004-2005 school year, there were 100 students who received free or reduced-price lunches. There were 695,280 low-income Illinois students who ate free or reduced-price lunches during that school year, while only 197,183 low-income students ate free or reduced-price breakfasts.

As a result, Illinois ranked 50th out of the states and the District of Columbia in the 2004-2005 school year in the percentage of low-income children who participated in the School Breakfast Program.

Slightly more than 60 percent of Illinois schools that offered the lunch program also offered the breakfast



program in the 2004-2005 school year, compared with 81.1 percent nationwide. The Food Research and Action Center's survey showed that 4,345 Illinois schools took part in the National School Lunch program as compared to 2,619 that offered breakfast.

Illinois' ranking — which dropped from 46th in the 2003-2004 school year — is low at a time when many food banks in the state report, anecdotally, that more families with children are hungry.

School Breakfast Program advocates say more Illinois schools should offer the program because advantages to students who eat breakfast are numerous.

"I don't care if a kid is from a middle-class household or upper-middle-class household — if the parents aren't there or aren't providing breakfast for their kids, why should we punish the kids?" asks Diane Doherty, executive director of the Illinois Hunger Coalition. "We've got decades of scientific research that shows [breakfast is] brain food. Your body needs energy, your body needs that nutrition, to get going, to think."

Teachers report improvement in students' attention spans and reduction in students' irritability when schools start breakfast programs, says Lynn Parker, director of child nutrition programs and nutrition policy for the Food Research and Action Center. Eating breakfast also can help prevent children from becoming overweight.

"Students that participated in the school breakfast are less likely to miss class, less likely to go to the school nurse with an upset tummy, less likely to have discipline problems, more likely to do better on standardized tests, more likely to do better on their grades," says Erik Peterson, spokesman for the School Nutrition Association.

Parker says, "It just is a smart investment. It just makes sense to think of school breakfast as part of the school day like books and pencils and papers."

Whether Illinois' children are starting their school day with a nutritional breakfast is part of the larger issue of hunger.

Between 1996 and 2004, an average of about 9 percent of households in Illinois were considered food insecure, a term used to describe households that cannot get enough food for all members,

according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service.

Meanwhile, Illinois food pantries report serving more children and more families in which at least one member of the household works but the income is not enough to buy food for all of them. Pam Molitoris, president of the Illinois Food Bank Association, says, "The working poor are fast becoming the people that need help in terms of food and other services."

At the St. Charles-based Northern Illinois Food Bank — which oversees 255 food pantries in a 13-county area in the north and northeastern part of the state — the percent of households with children under 18 that the food bank served rose from 29.9 percent to 33 percent over a four-year period, according to America's Second Harvest's national study, *Hunger in America 2006*. The Chicago-based organization represents emergency food providers throughout the country.

"These families are strapped and they

Illinois measures that push schools to provide breakfast:

- Require that Illinois schools where 40 percent or more students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches also must serve breakfast.
- Give start-up grants of \$3,500 per school for nonrecurring costs to begin a breakfast program and offer other financial incentives to schools that offer breakfast.
- Make schools eligible for an additional 10 cents in reimbursement for each free, reduced-price and paid breakfast served if participation in the breakfast program increases. The reimbursement is given if the number of breakfasts served in the month is 10 percent higher than the number of breakfasts served in the same month the previous year.
- Pay additional funds to some schools for a pilot program to offer free breakfasts to all students. Eligible schools have 80 percent or more of their students qualify for free and reduced-price lunches.

Maura Kelly Lannan

just can't provide for them," says H. Dennis Smith, executive director of the Northern Illinois Food Bank, which provides food for about 187,500 individuals each year.

When faced with not having enough money to pay for food, adults first cut the quality of their food, then the quantity, then the quality of their children's diets and finally the quantity of their children's diets, Parker says. "You see how people are trying to protect their children from the effects of food insecurity and hunger, but for many families they get to that point where they just don't have any other choice."

She says, "Childcare costs are going up, transportation costs are going up, housing costs are skyrocketing, health care costs are going up. You can't negotiate with the landlord about the rent, but you can cut down on the amount of food you eat and the quality of food you eat."

As a means of combating hunger among the state's poorest families, lawmakers have taken steps to increase the number of schools that provide breakfast by offering \$3,500 grants to schools to start the program. The state also offers higher reimbursements for certain schools. The Illinois Hunger Coalition reports that 255 Illinois schools offered breakfast for the first time last year because of a new state law, the Childhood Hunger Relief Act. The law, signed by Gov. Rod Blagojevich in February 2005, mandated that schools where 40 percent or more of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches also must serve breakfast.

But some lawmakers are reluctant to force more schools to participate in the national program.

"State government should not continue to take on more and more of the most basic parental responsibilities," says state Senate Republican Leader Frank Watson of Greenville. "Given the state's current fiscal mess, there are also concerns about the cost of this program and making the best use of our limited education dollars. We could use this money in the classroom."

State Rep. William Black, a Republican from Danville and a former teacher, says he voted against the Childhood Hunger Relief Act because he saw it as an unfunded mandate for schools, even

though many of the costs associated with it are reimbursed.

Illinois schools that can prove the program would be a financial burden can seek a waiver from the requirement to offer breakfast. Even with the new mandate, as of November 2005, 74 of the 1,822 Illinois schools that are required to offer breakfast did not. The Illinois State Board of Education reports that it is unclear how many of those districts were granted waivers by regional school superintendents. A new law requires such figures to be reported to the board.

Illinois performs better in providing other forms of food subsidies for children. For example, it ranks 17th among the states and Washington, D.C., in the number of children who participated in summer nutrition programs in July 2004 as compared with the number of students who received free or reduced-price meals in the National School Lunch Program in the 2003-2004 school year, according to the Food Research and Action Center.

Doherty blames the low participation in the School Breakfast Program on the state board, which she says does not do enough to educate schools and parents about the program.

Board spokeswoman Meta Minton disagrees, saying the board communicates regularly with school districts and offers nutrition information in weekly newsletters. She says a school district's decision to offer breakfast is a local, not a state, issue.

Rock Falls Elementary School District 13 asked for a waiver because Superintendent Jack Etnyre says the financially struggling district in northwestern Illinois' Whiteside County would have lost more than \$13,000 last year if it offered breakfast at each of its three schools. "The district's simply not in a position to do that," he says. Instead, breakfast is offered at one school and about 80 students participate. The district then transports some students who have eaten to two other schools on shuttle buses.

Federal School Breakfast Program

Schools are reimbursed:

\$1.31 per free breakfast

\$1.01 per reduced-price breakfast

24 cents per paid breakfast

25 cents in extra reimbursement may be available for each free or reduced-price breakfast served in schools where at least 40 percent of the lunches served were free or reduced-price

Maura Kelly Lannan



At Knox and Henry counties' Community Unit School District 208, Superintendent Gary Buckingham sought a waiver for the west central Illinois district because of transportation issues. He says the district also would lose about \$600 a year if it started the program. The 183-square-mile district, which serves five towns and about 800 students, buses all students to a central hub in Oneida and then shuttles some of them to other schools about 15 minutes away.

"I'd love to have the breakfast program because some kids don't get fed at home. But the way we're spread out and the way we have to shuttle kids from one building to another, it makes it kind of difficult," Buckingham says. "We'd be cutting short all the instructional time that the state requires us to have."

Some schools have found ways to resolve such transportation issues. At two Bloomington elementary schools with a high number of low-income students, breakfast is offered to all students during the first class of the day.

"It's a nice time for me to read to the kids, for us to chat about things, for us to go over the agenda," says Laurie Fuller, a third-grade teacher at Sheridan Elementary School in Bloomington. Fuller also has noticed fewer stomachaches and more attentiveness in her students.

Doherty of the Illinois Hunger Coalition wants universal breakfast in all schools, and she's pushing for a measure that would require all Chicago Public Schools to offer breakfast to all students. Now, 623 of 636 Chicago school sites offer breakfast, but Doherty says the student partici-

pation rate is low. She wants Chicago Public Schools to offer breakfast to all students in the classroom during the first period of the day.

State Sen. Miguel del Valle, the Chicago Democrat who sponsored the Childhood Hunger Relief Act, says his goal is to have every school provide breakfast.

"The legislative process is a process of increments. I can't go there until we can establish a track record,"

he says. "We're moving in the right direction."

Some ideas he is considering to get more schools to offer the program are to mandate that schools serve breakfast when fewer than 40 percent of students are low-income, educate parents on the importance of breakfast and improve the quality of the food.

U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin, an Illinois Democrat, agreed with del Valle's idea of lowering the mandated percentage.

Durbin pointed to New Jersey, which enacted a measure that required elementary schools to serve breakfast, beginning in the 2004-2005 school year, if at least 20 percent of students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunches. As a result, the state had about a 39 percent increase in the number of students participating in the breakfast program.

"New Jersey's experience tells us it would substantially increase the number of schools offering breakfast," says Durbin, who called Illinois' ranking "disappointing."

In Eddy's district, buses get to the schools early so children can eat. Students who don't eat work on computers.

"Even if it costs a little bit of money, it's worth every nickel. Kids don't learn well when they're hungry," says Eddy, who negotiated the waiver for financially burdened school districts. "While we're arguing over it, kids aren't learning, and that's our obligation." □

Maura Kelly Lannan is a Washington, D.C.-based freelance reporter who formerly covered Illinois government and politics for The Associated Press in Chicago.

SAVING WILDLIFE

Crane expert wins conservation award

George Archibald, whose research helped bring several species of crane back from the brink of extinction, has been awarded the first Indianapolis Prize for animal conservation from the Indianapolis Zoo. Funded by a donation from Eli Lilly and Co., the prize comes with a cash award of \$100,000. Archibald has said he intends to devote the money to the continued protection and preservation of cranes, which involves projects from Wisconsin to China.

Illinoisans have watched, and helped, as Archibald and his researchers trained whooping cranes to form a new migration pattern to Florida (see *Illinois Issues*, January 2002, page 8; July/August 2001, page 8; and November 2000, page 9). This state hosts the travelers as they rest on their way to their winter refuge.

When Archibald co-founded the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, Wis., in 1973, the North American whooping crane population was down to about a dozen birds. Many of the 15 species of cranes in the world were nearly extinct.

As of 2006, the whooping crane is a success story. There are more than 220 whooping cranes in the last wild migratory flock that winters in Texas and 62 adults and two chicks in the Operation Migration flock trained by ultralight planes to winter in Florida. The chicks, which hatched in the Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, are the first wild hatchlings of whooping cranes in the upper Midwest in more than 100 years.



George Archibald with Gee Whiz, 1988

Photograph by David Thompson, courtesy of the International Crane Foundation

Change of chairman

Dan Webb, who heads former Gov. George Ryan's legal defense team, will replace former Gov. **James Thompson** as chairman of the law firm Winston & Strawn. Thompson ended his 13-year tenure at the helm of the law firm just shy of the number of years he served as Illinois governor in the 1970s and '80s.

Webb joined the Chicago-based international firm in 1985 after serving as U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois. While serving as U.S. attorney, he led the Operation Greylord investigation into judicial corruption in Cook County. He also prosecuted retired Adm. John Poindexter, a military adviser to former President Ronald Reagan, on several felony charges related to the Iran-Contra affair.

Thompson joined Winston & Strawn in 1991. The board twice changed the rules so he could serve beyond the mandatory retirement age of 65.

"I was supposed to step down as chairman five years ago," Thompson told the *Chicago Sun-Times*. "It's time for the next generation — which is exactly what I said when I stepped down as governor."

His tenure sparked some controversy. Most recently, he brought attention to the firm for providing a so-far unsuccessful *pro bono* defense for Ryan against federal corruption charges, which cost an estimated \$20 million in lost revenue for the firm. Last month, Ryan was sentenced to six and a half years in prison.

Thompson also chaired the audit committee of publicly held Hollinger International Inc. when company executives allegedly took improper payments. The company, which owns the *Sun-Times*, has since changed its name to the Sun-Times Media Group.

Thompson will remain a Winston partner.

Honors

Carl Levin, U.S. senator from Michigan, received the Paul H. Douglas Ethics in Government Award for high standards in public service. His efforts against corruption have included stringent corporate responsibility laws, accounting and mutual fund reform and whistleblower protections. The Douglas award is administered by the University of Illinois' Institute of Government and Public Affairs.

Linda Hawker, secretary of the state Senate, is the lone Illinoisan among 24 legislative staffers or divisions receiving the National Conference of State Legislatures' 2006 Legislative Staff Achievement Awards, recognizing the best and most dedicated workers.

Ballot shifts

Kelly Street, a former union president from Bluffs, will appear on the November ballot in the race for the 93rd House District seat. He replaces **Chuck Scholz**, a Democrat and former mayor of Quincy who withdrew because of serious illness (see *Illinois Issues*, September, page 22).

Street runs a business that seals streets and works for McFarland Mental Health Center in Springfield.

Street will face attorney and Republican Rep. **Jil Tracy** of Mount Sterling, who has served in the seat since it was vacated this summer by 17-year Republican Rep. **Art Tenhouse** of Liberty.

Guilty pleas

A federal court jury convicted **Cecil Turner**, former secretary of state director of physical services, for helping three former state janitors get paid for 8,000 hours they didn't work. The three janitors pleaded guilty. **Steven Boyce** of Chatham and **David Medvesek** and **Dana Dinora** of Springfield are scheduled to be sentenced in December. They allegedly cost the state between \$120,000 and \$200,000 over six years. The secretary of state's inspector general and the Federal Bureau of Investigation uncovered the scheme. Turner will be sentenced in January.

For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

Super transition



Christopher Koch

Christopher Koch, a 12-year employee of the Illinois State Board of Education, will become interim state superintendent in December when current top administrator **Randy Dunn** leaves to become president of Murray State University in Kentucky.

"You'd be hard pressed to find a piece of this agency that [Koch] hasn't been involved with at some point," says Meta Minton, agency spokeswoman. "He's well known.

I think a lot of people were elated when he was named interim." Koch, pronounced "Cook," says he will focus on continuity for the agency. He's already worked closely with the board in drafting a plan to intervene with mismanaged and

"noncompliant" school systems, an emerging issue he helped address in Calumet School District 132.

The Illinois native and Bloomington resident was appointed director of special education in 2001. He then served as the board's chief education officer from 2002 to 2003. Previously, while with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education, he ran a program to help people move from school to work.

"I've had some experience in teacher preparation, early childhood, curriculum and instruction, research and development," he says. "All those things need to be shepherded through and focused during this interim period."

Koch will serve from December until the board names the next superintendent.

Q&A

Lori T. Healey

She's commissioner of Chicago's Department of Planning and Development, and this year's recipient of the Motorola Excellence in Public Service Award, co-sponsored by Motorola, NORBIC and Illinois Issues. She earned the award for her leadership, teamwork and innovation in the public, private and nonprofit sectors.



Prior to her appointment by Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley, she served as vice chairwoman for the Chicago Housing Authority, member of the mayor's Zoning Reform Commission and first deputy commissioner of the city's tax increment financing program.

In the private sector, she managed architecture projects in Chicago-based Perkins & Will and later served as vice president of Lonik/Schneider & Associates consulting firm.

This is an edited version of her conversation with Statehouse bureau chief Bethany Carson.

Q. *The city debated a so-called big-box ordinance to regulate minimum wages and benefits offered by large stores. Is this what communities need to secure jobs?*

I wholeheartedly agree and support the mayor's position on this, which is, "Why should Chicago be penalized when the suburbs that ring the city are welcoming these big boxes with open arms?"

To have something like this be an impediment to job creation and the provision of basic goods and services in neighborhoods, it's certainly not good policy.

Q. *How can struggling communities keep jobs and develop businesses?*

Most communities would really like to have a Target and a Home Depot and a Menards, and we've got what I believe is a very successful case of a Wal-Mart going in in [the] Austin [neighborhood]. Those are all sort of prize targets, but we certainly don't underestimate the value of smaller stores in those neighborhoods, as well as unique neighborhood retail.

We're concentrating on residential development right now because it's the residential development that drives the ultimate investment in the commercial. Retailers make decisions based on numbers, and those numbers are either sheer numbers of residential units or income or education levels. We're always trying to get them to think ahead of what their demographics curve would show.

Q. *How can the city find a balance between high-paying jobs and the risk of losing jobs?*

It's balancing a slightly higher cost of doing business in the city with the kind of labor force that many companies need. For example, Chicago's fastest-growing population demographic is 20- to 29-year-olds. Those are exactly the kind of laborers that high-technology firms need.

We're focused on the health care sector here, specifically in biotechnology. There's a lot of computer technology-based companies that need the kinds of employees that Chicago is successful in attracting. We're even doing fairly well with some of the smaller, highly flexible manufacturing companies.

Q. *Are tax increment financing districts the best tool for economic development?*

Absolutely, hands down. Because at the state and the federal level, there's not anything left. TIF is the only tool that municipalities have to help fund the capital costs of economic development and infrastructure projects.

We use it very creatively in Chicago. Since the city has started using TIF districts, there has been about \$1.4 billion in TIF dollars expended, and over a third of that has actually gone toward public infrastructure. By that I mean roads, street seeping, sewer improvements, public parks and schools. And the balance has gone for housing and job-creation projects. □

Healey will be honored at a luncheon to be held in Chicago on October 11.

Charles N. Wheeler III



Here's the truth behind the political advertising in the governor's campaign

by Charles N. Wheeler III

As Campaign 2006 heads into the homestretch, a refresher course in Civics 101 might help Illinois voters separate fact from fiction amid the campaign blather flooding the airwaves and clogging their mailboxes.

Let's begin by turning a critical eye to one of Gov. Rod Blagojevich's favorite themes: Just about everything that's currently wrong in Illinois is the fault of 26 years of Republican governors, in particular the last four under George Ryan.

Moreover, the Blagojevich camp would have voters believe, his Republican opponent, state Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka, did nothing to prevent the GOP-wrought calamities.

Topinka "must have been asleep at the switch for the four years of the Ryan Administration that left the state with a \$5 billion deficit and a pension debt that had doubled," proclaims the governor's campaign Web site. "She was all but silent as Gov. Ryan unveiled each of his four budgets — culminating in the worst fiscal crisis Illinois has ever seen."

Class, please come to order. Required reading will be the 1970 Illinois Constitution, Article IV — The Legislature. Please take note of Section 8, paragraph (c), which begins, "No bill shall become a law without the concurrence of a majority of the members elected to each house."

The meaning is clear: Any measure must have the affirmative votes of a

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to suggest that Ryan and
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Moreover, the Constitution
does not assign the state
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majority of both the Senate and of the House before it can pass the General Assembly. That's 30 in the Senate and 60 in the House. The logical corollary follows that the majority in either chamber can stop any bill from passing.

Now consult any reference work that lists the session-by-session partisan breakdown of the legislature. Remember, Ryan was inaugurated in 1999, serving until Blagojevich took over in 2003.

During that four-year period, Republicans had the majority in the Illinois Senate; thus, nothing could pass without at least some GOP help. The House, however, was a different story. There, Democrats outnumbered Republicans throughout Ryan's tenure. As a result, the Democrats could prevent the passage

of any proposal they chose to block.

The obvious conclusion: Neither Ryan's budget, nor any other legislation during his term, passed without the blessing of the House Democrats and their shrewd leader, Chicago Democratic Speaker Michael Madigan.

In fact, Ryan's first three budgets were hammered out by the governor and the four legislative leaders, including Madigan, and signed without change. In his final year, Ryan cut some \$565 million from the spending plan lawmakers sent him, much of it money added by the Democratic-controlled House. Led by the Senate Republicans, lawmakers held the line on all but \$55 million of the vetoes.

It's fiction, not fact, to suggest that Ryan and legislative Republicans were solely responsible for the perceived fiscal shortcomings of those years. Moreover, the Constitution does not assign the state treasurer any role in the legislative process. Her job is to deposit the state's revenues, earn interest on them and honor the checks the state comptroller writes to pay the bills.

In fact, Madigan and his troops in the House deserve an equal share of either the blame or the credit, depending on one's perspective, for the Ryan budgets. And Topinka was no more relevant to the legislative process than the guy who vacuums the House chambers.

Similarly, the Blagojevich campaign

likes to contrast its fiscal performance — it claims four years of balanced budgets — to Ryan's presumed profligacy. Here, too, the actual numbers as reported by state Comptroller Dan Hynes undercut the campaign rhetoric.

Take the balanced budget claim. For decades, the state's fiscal health has been measured on a cash basis, comparing money in the bank to bills outstanding at the end of each fiscal year. By that time-honored yardstick, Blagojevich has yet to balance the budget, although he's made good progress in that direction. In the state's most recent budget year, which ended last June 30, the state had \$590 million in its general funds account to cover \$881 million that was paid from July 1 through August 31, yielding a budgetary deficit of \$291 million. That's a dramatic improvement over the \$1.1 billion deficit posted in fiscal 2003, Ryan's last budget — but still a deficit.

The picture is less comforting when viewed through the lens of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, the

While the governor chastises his predecessor for bloated budgets, in fact Blagojevich's four budgets authorized spending \$8.2 billion more in general funds than the state spending plans for Ryan's four years.

private sector standard for financial reporting. In FY 2005, the most recent year available, the state's general funds posted a \$3.1 billion GAAP deficit, the comptroller reported.

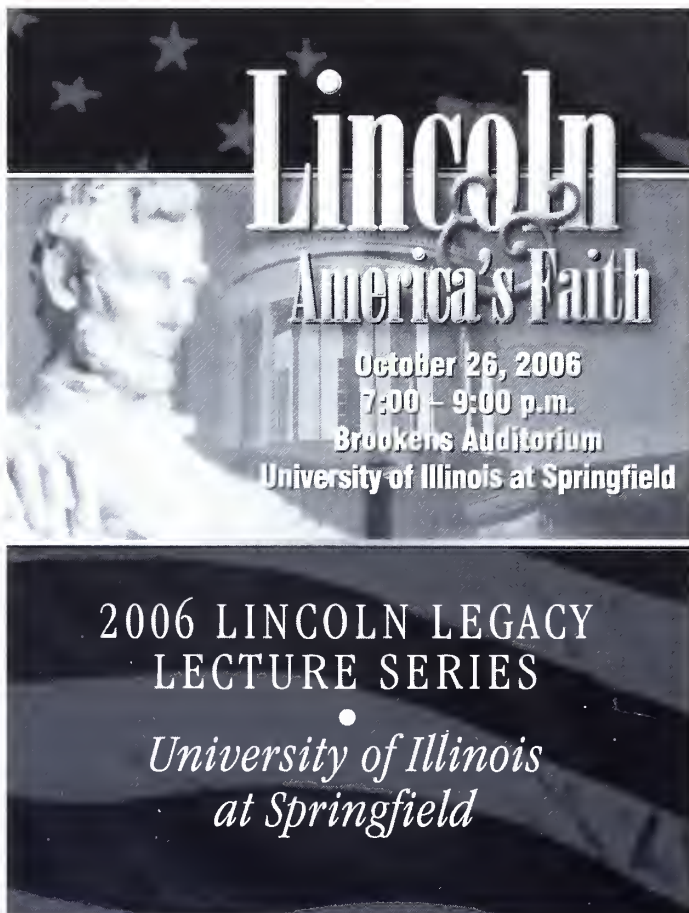
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Ryan's four years. General funds appropriations for this fiscal year stand at \$25.8 billion, 10 percent higher than the largest Ryan budget. And Democrats crafted the current blueprint with no Republican help.

Indeed, reviewing the entire 26 years of Republican stewardship that Blagojevich so likes to bash, one discovers that for 24 of those years, Democrats were the majority in one or both — usually both — legislative chambers. The only exception followed the 1994 election, which gave the GOP majorities of 33-26 in the Senate and 64-54 in the House from 1995-1997.

Shared governance, not one-party control, had been the norm in Illinois, until voters in 2002 and 2004 elected Democratic majorities in both chambers to serve with Blagojevich. □

Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.



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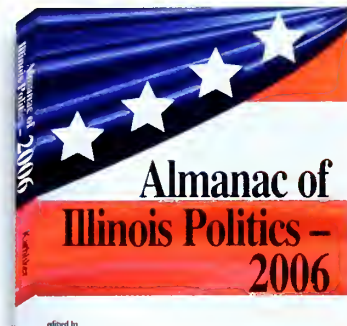
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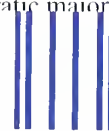
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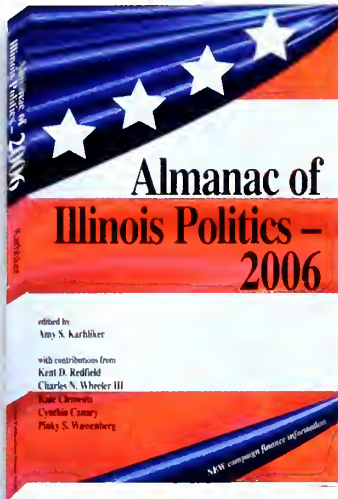
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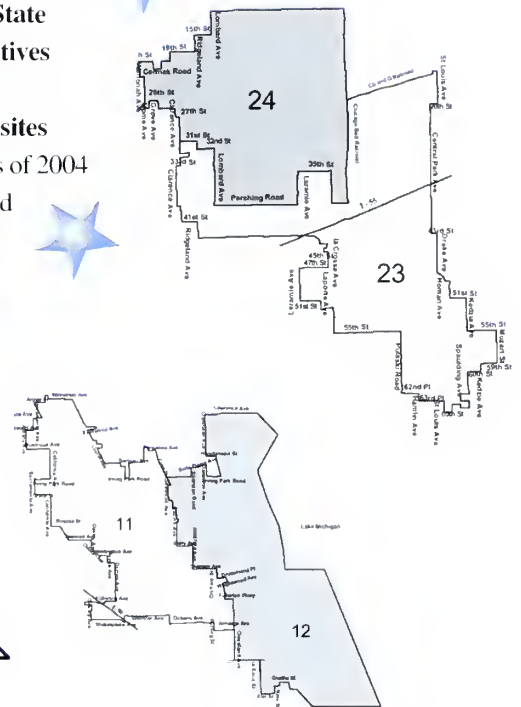
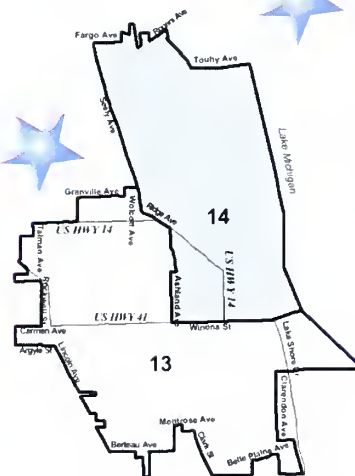
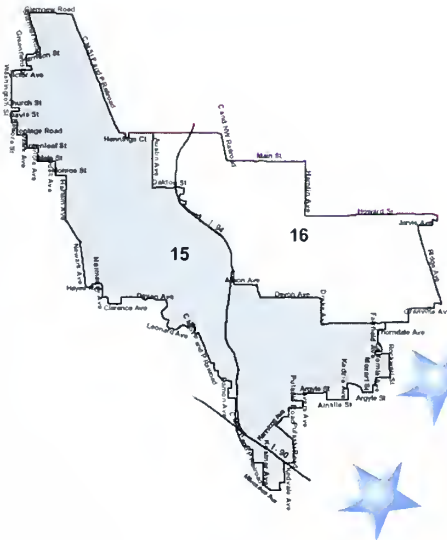
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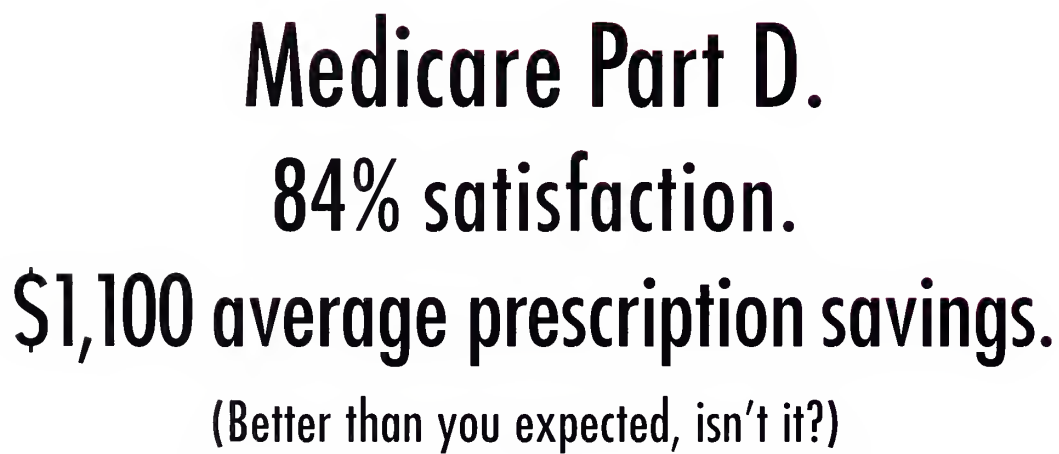
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